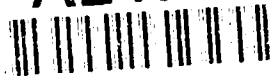


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MAJOR GENERAL LEONARD WOOD: A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP  
IN AN ARMY IN TRANSITION

BY

Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Sperberg  
United States Army

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IN AN ARMY IN TRANSITION

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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# ABSTRACT

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Leonard Wood rose from obscure civilian contract doctor in the American southwest of 1885 to Chief of Staff of the United States Army as the Army itself changed from frontier constabulary to global fighting force. Besides his service as Chief of Staff, Wood was a Medal of Honor winner in the campaign to capture Geronimo; commander of the Rough Riders in Spanish American War; Governor of Cuba and later the Philippines; a prolific writer; and, candidate for President of the United States. He was the "Prophet of Preparedness" and dedicated his career to initiating training and readiness improvements in the Army in the years of transition before World War I. But Leonard Wood was foremost a political general, shrewd, ruthless, and often insubordinate. Capable and ambitious, he used friends and position to further his power, prestige, and his singular vision of America. Eventually his conflict with influential political leaders, fellow generals, and presidents led to his "banishment" to Kansas while the Army he had spent years in promoting marched to World War I without him. Even now, he remains an enigma to the Army's officer corps. This study reviews Leonard Wood's service as the Army's foremost strategic leader in a period of unprecedented transition to examine his leader competencies and the political-military relationship lessons learned that may be apropos to today's Army leaders.

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**MAJOR GENERAL LEONARD WOOD: A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP  
IN AN ARMY IN TRANSITION**

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We are taught to consider that the schemes of our enemies are not dissimilar to our own. In practice we always base our preparations against an enemy on the assumption that his plans are good; indeed, it is right to rest our hopes not on a belief in his blunders but on the soundness of our provisions. Nor ought we to believe that there is much difference between man and man, but to think that the superiority lies with him who was reared in the severest school."

Thucydides

History of the Peloponnesian War<sup>1</sup>

A sovereign cannot raise an army because he is enraged, nor can a general fight because he is resentful. For while an angered man may again be happy and a resentful man again be pleased, a state that has perished cannot be restored nor the dead be brought back to life. Therefore, the enlightened ruler is prudent and the good general is warned against rash action. Thus the state is kept secure and the army preserved.

Sun Tzu

The Art of War<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER I: PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Study

At every moment of crisis in national purpose throughout our nation's history, great men have stepped forward to lead the American people to victory. Washington, Lincoln, Grant, and Eisenhower are among the few who are singularly responsible for the greatness of the United States. In the period 1890 to 1920, our nation faced such a crisis. In one of the most critical moments in our young country's development, a soldier emerged

from the Indian frontier to eventually become "one of the principal military reformers" of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

General Leonard Wood literally sprang into national prominence and for the next 20 years directly influenced every major military operation and decision. But when he was at the zenith of his career he was "banished" by an exasperated president and lapsed into obscurity. His fame was quickly overshadowed by other officers such as General John J. Pershing and Major General Frank Ross McCoy. Despite a lifetime of heroic service to his country and recognition as our greatest military leader in a dynamic period in American military development, General Wood remains virtually unknown to today's officer corps. They know little of his personal ambitions, vision for the new American Army, or his stormy political confrontations. We know much of our popular generals. But before the obstinance of Patton, before the ambitious insubordination of MacArthur, and before the calls for modernization of Billy Mitchell, Leonard Wood was the foremost obsessive, ambitious, combative, modernization progressive.

Yet in our study of strategic leaders we hardly looked at this period of our history. At a time of the most significant change in our national military strategy since the Revolutionary War, many great and inspired Americans began to challenge and debate the role of the new United States Army. A serious study of leadership must include an analysis of this period and, in particular, the stormy career of Major General Leonard Wood.

## Introduction

From his earliest posting to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, until his death in 1927, Leonard Wood left a trail of few loyal admirers and a plethora of enemies, both military and civilian. He is accused of self-serving, ruthless, insubordinate conduct where actions were taken more for personal gain than in support of mission or his fellow soldiers. "The cynical might say that, for the Army, he was too intelligent in an outspoken, obvious, and even scintillating way; he was likely to make the ordinary officer feel uncomfortable. But the real rub of it was probably that Wood's forte was not soldiering but showmanship."<sup>4</sup> Yet Leonard Wood was acknowledged for his innovative and visionary approach to preparedness. "In the last analysis, all that General Wood has lived and preached and achieved is merely democracy translated into terms of civil and soldierly performance."<sup>5</sup>

The naming of a sprawling Army post in Missouri may honor the man. But it does little to explain his principles or teach the lessons learned from his confrontations with political and military leaders as he remains unknown by today's officers.

Unlike many generals Wood is the subject of much published material. The general, himself, was a prolific writer. His official reports, histories, commentaries, letters, and articles give keen insight to the man and his vision. Many other authors wrote both in unabashed support or in critical challenge to the

general's position. This study also relied on many of the books which were done while the general was still actively campaigning for military preparedness. They offered a special perspective on early twentieth century America. Hermann Hagedorn's two volume biography of Leonard Wood is a detailed account of both the general's life and the political-military environment of the time, though strongly biased in favor of the general. Jack C. Lane, a modern Wood biographer, is much more critical of the General's actions. This effort attempts to balance the account of one of America's most noted leaders.

#### Leadership, Vision, and Leonard Wood

Leadership for the Army is defined in three levels, direct, senior, and strategic. Direct leadership is normally at levels below battalion command and is a "control, structure, and task oriented action."<sup>6</sup> Leadership at senior levels is practiced at brigade, division, and corps levels and is characterized by a "combination of direct (staff) and indirect (rest of the organization) actions."<sup>7</sup>

Leadership at strategic levels is vision. Army Field Manual 22-103, the Army's definitive manual on leadership, states that command and leadership at this level "blends vision, communication, and craft to achieve proper command effect."<sup>8</sup>

A strategic leader has a "future focus" and articulates

"desirable and understandable vision which gives purpose and meaning to all his people."<sup>9</sup> Strategic vision provides an organization with a sense of direction. "Great leaders of our time have been not only effective operators and decisionmakers, but also people of vision who have had a marvelous sense of what was possible, how to set and articulate goals, and how to motivate their people to strive successfully for these goals."<sup>10</sup>

It is not only important that strategic leaders believe in their vision. It is just as important that they know the environment in which their vision is made and through which they must take actions to achieve their visionary goals. The environment of leadership includes many factors impacting on decisions and their outcomes. The successful strategic leader must exert influence over these factors to develop an environment favorable to his vision. The leader must either accept the environment as immutable, counter its impact with actions of his own, or reinforce selected aspects depending on the environment's support of his vision. The strategic leader must "strive to influence organizational culture; wisely allocate resources; generate appropriate activities; and, build consensus within the fog of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment."<sup>11</sup>

Leonard Wood had "vision" at a time when the Army's leaders, sustained on limited budgets, had entrenched themselves in limited roles and objectives for themselves and their units. The ambitious frontier doctor, outdoorsman, and apostle of strenuous

life formed his vision as he experienced a broad range of assignments (see APPENDIX A). After obtaining an appointment to surgeon in the regular force from his contract status, Wood proceeded to parlay a series of powerful friends for position and influence. He approached his career with boundless energy and truly spectacular personal achievements. At every step he formed opinions, reinforced prejudices, and became fully committed that "we insure our men shall go into the next war well instructed and prepared to render their service and not waste them needlessly and recklessly through lack of instruction or preparation."<sup>12</sup> With unfettered enthusiasm he became a military evangelist, a "natural storm center to the Army."<sup>13</sup>

His vision was one of preparedness, compulsory military training, and modernization. His vision was one of efficiency in both staff administration and field leadership. He had personally experienced intense combat and the horrific conditions of the Indian Wars for which he received the Congressional Medal of Honor for the final campaign to capture Geronimo (see APPENDIX B). He had also overcome a lethargic bureaucracy to mobilize a regiment of cavalry (known as the Rough Riders) for the Spanish-American War, and had commanded a brigade of cavalry at the Battle of San Juan Hill. Later, as Governor-General of Cuba and then the Philippines, he became embroiled in the politics of struggling colonialism and new worldwide responsibilities. Through it all he confronted deep rooted distrust of a large standing army.

By the time he became Chief of Staff, Leonard Wood had developed his vision for the Army and America. He had embraced it not merely as a policy, but as a dogma that he asserted with the energy of a religious zealot.

Wood became Chief of Staff more intent than most of his more conventionally military colleagues in his dedication to the principle that the purpose of an Army is to be ready to wage war, both in order to deter war and to fight those that cannot be avoided. He shared the Rooseveltian notions about the world power of the United States. He believed that the United States Army must be ready to fight with anybody, any potential enemy. This conviction was also rooted soundly, if vaguely, in the belief that a nation of the wealth and power of the United States could not remain indefinitely and irresponsibly aloof from any major conflict that might erupt among the great powers.<sup>14</sup>

To understand how revolutionary this approach was and the impact of his vision and style of leadership, one must understand the environment in which Leonard Wood lived. There were two paramount influencing factors on America's national military strategy of the period. First was the political-philosophical debate between "militant" expansionists and "pacifist" isolationists. America was at the dawn of a new era as an emerging international power, complete with the trappings of colonial possessions in both of the world's major oceans. An unofficial, evolutionary trade expansionist policy had fueled a new "Nationalism" that put America on a path to world competition and conflict. "The words 'Manifest Destiny' were on every lip, though stretched to mean a great deal more than it had signified in the 1840s and 1850s."<sup>15</sup> Now some prominent Americans looked



to domination in the Western Hemisphere and expanding influence around the world.

Second, America still felt the power of a democracy was directly threatened by the "power" of a large standing army. However, the United States maintained a modern navy as an essential part of securing its trade routes, building its first modern battleship in 1890. At the same time, the Army languished. "There was no general staff, no board of strategy, no Department of Tomorrow, and the Commanding General spent his time quarreling for prominence with the Secretary of War."<sup>16</sup>

These overarching environments must be thoroughly understood for the impacts of the leadership and vision of Leonard Wood to be seen in the context of the strategic issues of the period. America and her army were about to begin the most significant period of transition since the establishment of the republic. Such radical changes in philosophy and structure allowed the leadership of a Leonard Wood to flourish and rise to the highest positions. Therefore, this study begins with a critical look at the state of the nation and its army as a means to understand how radical change fostered radical leadership.

#### Four Phases in the Study of Leonard Wood

Once understanding the leader environment, Leonard Wood's leadership characteristics can then be studied by looking at four distinct periods in his career. The first is his service in the

Geronimo campaign of 1886. Here he had his initial leadership opportunity as he led soldiers through hostile territory on combat missions. It was there in Arizona that he first demonstrated and reinforced those personal attributes that would mark his conduct and interpersonal relationship skills for the rest of his life.

The second period is his service as a combat leader and his subsequent role as military government administrator in both Cuba and in the Moro Province of the Philippines. From approximately 1898 to 1906, Wood rose from obscure captain to major general and ultimately became the best known officer in the U. S. Army. In an amazing display of leadership and personal achievement, he brought the Army from its frontier constabulary role to center stage in world involvement.

The third phase is Wood's role as Army Chief of Staff and his relationship with President Woodrow Wilson. His performance as Chief of Staff is recognized as a great personal achievement which saved the Chief of Staff concept in the face of serious challenge by the Bureau Chiefs. His efforts resulted in a greatly streamlined staff procedures. But his stormy relationship with his Commander-in-Chief over his preparedness campaign was a turning point in his career. Not since the Civil War confrontations between President Abraham Lincoln and Major General George McClellan, and not again until the President Harry Truman and General Douglas MacArthur situation, would a President and his leading general be so publicly embroiled. Leadership and

responsibility became diverted by personal cause and singular purpose.

The fourth period is Wood's relationship with General John J. Pershing and the Presidential campaign of 1920. Wood continued to serve his government for a long period after leaving Washington, but after not being selected as the commander of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I and his defeat in his run for the presidency, Wood's public following and stature almost instantly evaporated. He was replaced in the public eye by heroes like General Pershing and rising new ones like MacArthur. Wood's final tour as Consul General to the Philippines from 1921 to 1927 was the twilight of a career that had long since reached its emotional high-water mark. Leonard Wood had run the full gamut of shining glory and deep personal defeat by 1920.

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Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our process of government; whether our strength is being sapped by deficit financing indulged in too long; by federal paternalism grown too mighty; by power groups grown too arrogant; by politics grown too corrupt; by crime grown too rampant; by morals grown too low; by taxes grown too high; by extremists grown too violent. These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution. Your guidepost stands out like a beacon in the night: duty, honor, country.

General Douglas MacArthur  
"Farewell to the Corps of Cadets"<sup>1</sup>

When senior leaders pledge themselves to work cooperatively, they reduce considerably the risk of highly competitive individuals turning good, honest competition into dysfunctional criticism, parochialism, and unproductive opposition.

Perry M. Smith  
Taking Charge, 1986<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER II: THE STATE OF THE ARMY

### The Field Army

The Army that Leonard Wood joined as a civilian contract doctor in 1885 was a frontier constabulary force of approximately 25,000 men. The soldiers in the field were spread across scattered posts, most no larger than company size. The Commanding General and a number of Bureau Chiefs supervised day-to-day operations from Washington, D. C. Despite the myths fostered by modern Hollywood, the Army of the 1880s had little of the skills and organization that had characterized its successful

large operations of the Civil War.

A large standing army was still seen more as a threat to the people and a democratic government than a protector of the very freedom the people enjoyed. In fact, the people felt quite secure within a huge country whose security was ensured, not by the Army, but by the vast oceans on both coasts. Army budgets steadily shrank and its daily activities settled into a calm malaise.

The small army of the 1880s reflected the limited defense roles assigned. "Although the Army was small and was sometimes treated by Congress as a military orphan, it was probably big enough to accomplish the policy objectives assigned to it."<sup>3</sup> Those policies essentially meant subduing the Indians and providing security for the expansion of America as settlers filled the land. The Army found itself in short, ferocious, but relatively small battles against the Indians. Meanwhile it had to survive the Spartan hardships of living on lonely outposts, the tedium of the rigid military routine, and the physical dangers of long mounted or foot patrols, minimally equipped and in all kinds of weather. But hardships raised and shaped a fighting force proud of its role and accomplishments yet mindful of its momentary setbacks. The heritage of this period of development of the American Army included many victories for sure, but also defeats (Little Big Horn), and some questionable actions (Wounded Knee).

The Army of the American west was organized and operated

successfully in small units. However, isolated posts and the drudgery of meticulous post administration responsibilities meant "the officer corps had no opportunity to study higher strategy or to gain experience in maneuvering larger bodies of troops."<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly "there had been no brigade formation of troops in the country for thirty years, and only a few of the officers had seen as large a unit as a regiment assembled in one place."<sup>5</sup>

The serious impact of shrinking Army budgets, rapid westward expansion of "civilization," and the number of posts of questionable value confronted the Army towards the end of the century. There was a genuine desire of the Army to close unnecessary bases and consolidate the army on larger, better located posts more suitable for training. But "two-thirds of the senators and half the representatives cherished garrisons which help feed the faithful and appeared convinced that this intrusion of policy upon the private interests of their constituents was an instance of executive tyranny not to be borne."<sup>6</sup> Though a few closures were realized, by the start of the Spanish-American War, regiments remained split up across the country in small posts without the resources and little inclination to train, modernized, or prepare for contingencies.

The inevitable reduction after the Civil War had been followed by what was known as "the great dispersion;" regiments were split and the parts widely scattered, a company here, two companies there. They were forgotten by their country yet they stood ready to shed their blood for them. The nation's armed defenders at no time rendered more unselfish service, but they rendered it as policemen or as posses, not as an army. The legislators knew that in an emergency they had in



the veterans of the Civil War, a vast reserve army which could save their bacon for them. But year by year the potentialities of this reserve faded and the country did nothing to build up a national defense to take its place.<sup>7</sup>

Limited roles and missions also meant that until the Spanish-American War no soldiers served outside of the borders of the United States. A ever shrinking cadre of senior officers who had served in the Civil War still manned the various headquarters. There was even a representation of ex-Confederate officers serving the Army and our nation. Two prominent ex-Confederate generals were Fitzhugh Lee and Joe Wheeler. Fitzhugh Lee was the U. S. Counsel General to Havana, Cuba, from 1896 to 1898, and later served as a major general in the U. S. Army invading Cuba in the Spanish-American War. U. S. Representative Joe Wheeler, from Alabama, was a cavalry commander for the Confederacy and became the commanding general of the cavalry for the U. S. forces in Cuba.<sup>8</sup>

Promotions were stagnant. Captain Lawton, whom Wood was to join as assistant surgeon in 1885, had remained a captain for nearly 23 years despite constant heroic service in the Indian Wars. Likewise, "there was no rotation of personnel between the administering and fighting branches of the service."<sup>9</sup>

#### The National Command Authority at the Turn of the Century

The Army's senior administering structure was comprised of three intertwined but seldom cooperating entities in Washington,

D. C.: the Secretary of War, the commanding general, and the separate bureau chiefs. This structure led to so many problems that Leonard Wood was to often say, "The Army's enemies are within itself."<sup>10</sup>

By the 1890s, there were ten autonomous bureaus, each with its own budget "appropriated, specified, and monitored in detail by Congress."<sup>11</sup> The functional bureaus, or departments as some were called, were the Judge Advocate General, Inspector General, Adjutant General, Quartermaster, Subsistence, Pay, Medical, Corps of Engineers, Ordnance, and Signal Corps.<sup>12</sup> They jealously protected their authority within their functional area, effectively squandering any opportunity for overall planning and coordinating. The bureau chiefs "considered themselves responsible to the Secretary and denied the authority of the commanding general. At times they acted as though they were subject only to the President and to Congress, where they had enormous lobbying influence."<sup>13</sup>

The bureaus focused their attention on absolute accountability and their "stovepipe" administration channels established strict procedures along parochial lines. The authority and power of a bureau, and hence its fiscal support and favor from Congress, was seen to be solely a function of the rigid control it maintained over its particular area. The Army labored under a system which emphasized "where things were" over "how things were used" in training or operational support. A frustrated Leonard Wood was to comment several years later:

What we want to do is to get away from as many of the restraints which have been placed upon us by comptrollers, auditors, etc., as we can, and also from those which have been worked into our regulations by bureau chiefs in order that they might know where each pair of stockings, and odds and ends of their supplies are. Within reasonable limits they should know this, but there is a limit beyond which we should not pass."<sup>14</sup>

The military head of the Army was the "Commanding General," a position created after the War of 1812 by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun but "without Congressional authorization, prescribing its duties and functions, or defining its relationship with the bureaus, the Secretary, and the President."<sup>15</sup> While Army Regulations put the Commanding General in the chain of command from the President to the geographical grouping of field posts (called "departments") for "military operations, control, and discipline,"<sup>16</sup> all fiscal affairs for logistics and support remained with the bureau chiefs. Both the commanding general and the bureau chiefs were appointed for life (as yet there was no military retirement system). The "whole system was sanctioned and regulated in the minutest detail by Congressional legislation."<sup>17</sup> Commanding Generals and bureau chiefs serving for "life" outlasted Secretaries of War, who changed on a frequent basis, and no meaningful cooperation developed. Frustrations raised to a point where "several commanding generals moved their headquarters from Washington."<sup>18</sup>

## The National Guard

The other part of our armed forces was the militia based on the Militia Bill of 1792. Since the Civil War the militia was becoming known as the National Guard.<sup>19</sup> After the Civil War the separate state national guards had pretty much gone on their own ways and the units varied greatly in quality depending on local emphasis and support. Certainly few saw the national guard as an augmentation to the national Regular Army, but only as a special state constabulary force to "repress strikes and domestic disturbances."<sup>20</sup>

The Pennsylvania militia, for example, was called out during the Homestead Strike in 1892. The national guard administrators of the late 1800s pointed to the constitutional provision that the national guard might be federalized only to "execute the laws of the union, repress insurrections, and repel invasions."<sup>21</sup> There was no thought or plan to engage the national guard against invading massed armies of another nation and certainly no consideration to sending the guard to an overseas war.

The method of administration, staffing, and envisioned employment of the state national guards created a lethargy in spirit, no plan of action, and a politicized, aging cadre. A few militia units retained some military appearance and local members would exhibit spirit and bravado, usually based more on pure membership than on skill and performance. The regular army remained skeptical of the militia and seldom, if ever, involved

the militia in plans or training.

This nearly total lack of doctrine and logistical preparedness of the Army for large scale warfare and the fractured national command authority made coordinated planning and budgeting among the Army departments and the various state national guards impossible. When the nation sought to rely on her armed forces to rest the Philippines and Cuba from Spanish control, a poorly prepared Army was only able to respond slowly and with immense difficulty. The "United States fought the war in a dream, but Spain, fortunately, was in a trance."<sup>22</sup>

#### Overview

The American Army's ends, ways, and means were confused by 1890. A largely subdued Indian menace, an unsympathetic Congress, and a general lethargy throughout the leadership sidelined the needs of the service. Before the war with Spain, the small line Army dispersed among its many posts across the country, a struggling and bickering national command authority, and a national guard system of questionable readiness reflected a complacency in executing any kind of national defense policy. An old guard of aging Civil War veterans saw little need for an American Army to be prepared for war. Further, the government distrusted a large force and actively ensured it stayed a limited constabulary. A malaise descended on an army that was about to enter the most radical metamorphosis of its 130 years existence.

Elihu Root wrote of the Army of this time:

Present utility was really controlling consideration, and the possibility of war seemed at all times so vague and unreal that it had no formative power in shaping legislation regarding the army. The result was an elaborate system admirably adept to secure pecuniary accountability and economy of expenditure in time of peace; a large number of small and separate commands, well officered and well disciplined, very efficient for police against the Indians; and a class of officers, most of whom were of high order of individual excellence. But the result did not include the effective organization and training of the Army as a whole for the purpose of war."<sup>23</sup>

Events far beyond the control of the Army's national military leadership or its bogged down bureaucracy were to alter radically the very foundations of the Army. America was to change from a wild west, isolationist society to an imperial power, and with it, the legacy of Leonard Wood was to irrevocably change the way America looked at its national defense strategy.

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Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the  
first?

The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,  
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in  
marriage,

The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought  
near,

The lands to be welded together.

You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,  
You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours,  
You not for trade or transportation only,  
But in God's name, and for thy sake, O soul.

Walt Whitman

"Passage to India"<sup>1</sup>

Our nation with unlimited interests blest,  
Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest;  
Abroad our empire shall no limits know,  
But like the sea in boundless circles flow.

William H. Seward  
Secretary of State  
May 10, 1867<sup>2</sup>

### CHAPTER III: THE STATE OF THE NATION

#### Early Expansionism

While our small frontier Army fought Indians and boredom, a new energy and adventure was overtaking America's foreign relations. It was not so much a change in specific policies, but rather a reaction to an expanding economy. The energy pushed America outward. "Trade is the universal prophet of civilization. It is the all powerful incentive to action. Trade is ever hungry for more."<sup>3</sup>

No longer content with a westward expansion limited by our Pacific coast, the period 1860 to 1900 saw America extend her reach west to the Orient, south into Latin America, and north to Alaska. Businessmen, adventurers, missionaries of many persuasions, and a few progressive politicians carried the American flag into ever expanding spheres of influence. U. S. business and trade interests, the resulting international competition, and eventually the entangling snare of global conflict were to ultimately put the Army and Leonard Wood into a collision course with isolationist budgets and restrictions.

Expansion of American influence outside of its contiguous borders effectively began with Secretary William H. Seward's purchase of the Alaskan territory from Russia. Seward had said:

The borders of the federal republic shall be extended so that it shall greet the sun when he touches the tropics, and when he sends his gleaming rays towards the polar circle, and shall include even distant islands in either ocean.<sup>4</sup>

Not a folly at all, the purchase of Alaska was part of a plan to establish in the Pacific basin sole proprietorship of trade in the Orient. Expansion was not seen as just a drive from the sake of territorial gain. Rather, Seward and others saw commerce as the greatest occupation of our nation and the government as the "chief agent of its advancement in civilization and enlargement of the empire."<sup>5</sup> They spoke of dominating world markets, and the greatest of the potential world markets lay in Asia.

As the drive for new markets for American commerce brought

new territories to the United States, America struggled to develop a national plan or policy for expansion. Unfortunately, the government and its overseas representatives remained naive and unsophisticated in the ways of foreign relations. They often bungled rather than developed a coherent international strategy. Two especially tense situations put America's newly expanding influence in the path of potential armed conflict, the deaths of American sailors in Valparaiso, Chile, in 1891, and the first attempted annexation of Hawaii in 1893. War was narrowly averted in both cases, but they demonstrated the common insensitivity and ineptness by America's political leaders.

Undeterred, leaders such as Secretary of State James Blaine, "Jingo Jim" to some, and others saw "annexation by trade" as a committed goal of American policy to support commerce. "I am not much of an annexationist," President Benjamin Harrison wrote Blaine in 1891, "though I do feel that in some directions, as to naval stations and points of influence, we must look forward to a departure from the too conservative opinions which have been held heretofore."<sup>6</sup> Though a small minority of leaders were "well informed about world affairs and clear in their view of what U. S. policy should be...diplomatic initiatives usually originated elsewhere than in Washington. American foreign relations were composed of incidents not policies, a number of distinct events, not sequences, that moved from source toward conclusion."<sup>7</sup>

America sought the ends, expanded trade routes and markets;

through the ways of new sea lanes of communication and posts, expanded American international influence, and a protective shield of new territories; insured by the means, a nationalistic drive and a seemingly unlimited resource reservoir of human and economic energy. As it began, however, few saw a need for an armed U. S. force beyond the protection provided by a modern navy. Seward, and other later trade expansionists, still saw standing armies as threats and abhorrent to a democratic society. "Wisdom, justice, and moderation in the conduct of our foreign relations make it easy to acquire by peaceful negotiations all the more than could be attainable by unlawful aggression."<sup>8</sup>

Individual initiatives did lead to limited market expansion into the Pacific from 1865 to 1890. A ring of American presence and influence slowly extended out towards China to establish secure shipping lanes for American vessels, supply points, and anchorages. Protection of the expanding commercial routes led to the resurgence in the U. S. Navy's ship building program in the 1880s and launching of the massive dreadnoughts at the close of the century. Speeding the flow of commerce drove the need for a canal through the Panamanian isthmus, basing throughout the Caribbean and the Pacific, and removal of any foreign (European) presence seen as a direct threat to our free and unimpeded movement in our expanding spheres of influence.

## Sustained Expansionism

Studies of our change from introverted, developing country to colonial power identified international and domestic factors fueling support for our expanding overseas influence.

Internationally, our perspective on world events changed markedly from 1870 to 1895. For example, the basic elements of the Cuban situation remained essentially unchanged in these years. What did change was "the way American looked at it. Earlier generations, though not unsympathetic, were prepared to stand by and do nothing while Spain suppressed the Cuban revolution."<sup>9</sup> The new perspective saw Spain as European competition to our markets and a threat to the free flow of trade goods. By 1893, Senator Platt of Connecticut argued "A policy of isolation did well enough when we were an embryo nation, but today things are different...we are 65 million of people, the most advanced and powerful on earth, and regard to our future welfare demands an abandonment of the doctrine of isolation."<sup>10</sup>

Just a few years later in a more impassioned speech on the Senate floor, Albert Beveridge (Republican from Indiana) demonstrated just how far some Americans saw our reach extending:

Fate has written our policy. The trade of the world must and can be ours. And we shall get it. We will cover the ocean with our merchant marine. We will build a navy to the measure of our greatness. Great colonies, governing themselves, flying our flag, and trading with us, will grow about our ports of trade. Our institutions will follow, American law, American order, American civilization, and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted

by those agents of God and made beautiful and bright.<sup>11</sup>

Domestically, three events seemed to push the expansionist effort: a social malaise of the late 1880s (a growing frustrations with society, its population, and limited economic opportunities); the economic depression of the 1890s (demonstrating the need for additional foreign markets); and the threat to U. S. markets (European protectionism of foreign markets).<sup>12</sup> An increasingly powerful group of prominent Republican legislators, among them Theodore Roosevelt, Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Cushman K. Davis; writer Brooks Adams; Secretaries of State John Hay and James Blaine; Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy; and, Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, strongly worked for America to abandon its isolationist materialism and exert the power that it truly possessed. The benefits were clear.

Imperialism helped heal surviving sores between old Confederate and Union men. Jingoism diverted men away from the reflection on the slump of the 1890s. Of course not all Americans were jingoes, but it was an adventurous time.<sup>13</sup>

The period between 1890 and 1900 became the great watershed for American foreign policy. Anointed by success in the Spanish American War, America truly became a colonial power. Nationalistic zeal poured forth and a new racism swept America. "Expansionism has never been and never should be an end in itself," an author of the period wrote, "but merely a means of working out our highest national destiny. It would be deplorable

for America to decline the acquisition, whether by peaceful purchase or by forcible conquest, the possession of which was essential to our own safety, peace, and prosperity."<sup>14</sup>

The pressures of colonial responsibilities split governments and clearly divided the political parties.

The Republican party, being a party of large vested interests, would be best served by colonial opportunities and new fields for exploitation. Being a party led by reason and not tradition, it could more readily adapt to new conditions. The Democratic party, as the party of individual rights, would view with repugnance any departure from the early established principles of self-government. Pledged to retrenchment of expenses and all possible reduction of taxes, it would oppose the burden of an army and navy adequate to a colonial system.<sup>15</sup>

#### Anglo-Saxonism -- Social Darwinism

Not only was expansionism seen as a necessity for trade but it was also seen as the inevitable result of the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon and English speaking people. Anglo-Saxonism became a "religion" of American colonialism.

The English of the Americas has reached Asia to meet the English of the parent country coming from the opposite direction. It means the beginning of world division on lines of language and trade if not entirely on race affiliations. Having thus entered on the new era of world politics, the inherited land-hunger of the Saxon will manifest itself more and more.<sup>16</sup>

Anglo-Saxonism taught that those of the pure white race were



of the highest rung on the evolutionary ladder with "rare skills in the art of government which uniquely qualified them for an imperial role."<sup>17</sup> The heavily racist tone was not immediately vengeful. It did, however, derive from the disappointments of Reconstruction (many Northerners becoming frustrated with the lack of progress made by the freed slaves) giving new credence to the theory of Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism held that there were greater and lesser societies and races. It was perceived that the "inability of Asian, African, and Latin American peoples to deny the will of great powers merely demonstrated their unfitness in the life struggle."<sup>18</sup>

#### Overview

Such were the forces in American foreign policy and national military strategy as a young captain of the Medical Department returned from the southwest desert. A resource rich industrial America was reaching out to far flung lands. The American flag sailed around the world ignoring the security considerations and responsibilities of increasing reliance on foreign trade. There was an arrogance in our destiny, a blind faith in our language and racial superiority, and a confidence that the natural evolution of our industry, government, and religion were superior to all other forms in all other lands. Though led at times by visionary statesmen like Seward, reactionary annexationists like "Jingo Jim" Blaine, or well intentioned presidents like Benjamin

Harrison, the net result was an America embarked on a global commitment with a modern navy and the bare minimum frontier constabulary.

Until the Spanish-American War started, the Army still languished in essentially the same state of readiness, training, and organization as it had since the Civil War. Leonard Wood would see it as his destiny to drag America's leadership, and failing that, her people, to the realization that the Army and the military preparedness of her citizenry were her most vulnerable predicament. Leonard Wood stood at the crossroads of a rapidly changing America. His role in defining the "new" Army and his commitment to our country's readiness seemed to be the culmination of the right man at the right place at the right time.

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The general must rely on his ability to control the situation to his advantage as opportunity dictates. He is not bound by established procedures...The supreme requirements of generalship are a clear perception, profound strategy coupled with far reaching plans, and an ability to examine the human factors.

Sun Tzu  
The Art of War<sup>1</sup>

Every individual from the highest commander to the lowest private must always remember that inaction and neglect of opportunities will warrant more severe censure than an error in judgement in action taken. The criterion by which a commander judges the soundness of his own decision is whether it will further the intentions of the higher commander.

U. S. Army Field Manual 100-5, 1944  
Operations<sup>2</sup>

#### CHAPTER IV: LEONARD WOOD AS LEADER -- EARLY EXAMPLES

### Frontier Surgeon

Leonard Wood did not come from the traditional military training background. He had no military training whatsoever when he joined the U. S. Army as a contract surgeon in 1885. He entered as a volunteer seeking adventure and with more than his fair share of patriotism and desire to serve his country. His posting to the American Southwest was the first of many key

assignments in his career where he built on his personal experiences and amassed a collection of powerful mentors.

The young doctor's early experiences on the frontier demonstrated his physical and moral courage. When he reported to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, General Nelson Miles had recently replaced General George Crook as commander of the Department of Arizona. Miles had ordered Captain Henry Lawton, Civil War veteran and tough experienced Indian fighter, to "pursue Geronimo until he and his band were captured or destroyed."<sup>3</sup>

Wood had recently received his much sought after appointment into the regular army by the start of the last Geronimo campaign. The new Lieutenant Wood had already established a reputation among the soldiers for physical fitness, energy, and enthusiasm to be where the action was. He had already participated in several long exhausting patrols. As the final campaign to capture Geronimo was about to begin, Wood worked to be part of it.

General Miles picked Leonard Wood to be Lawton's medical officer, after some self-serving pestering by Wood himself, "for the certain combination he possessed of intelligence, physical power, and resolute spirit."<sup>4</sup> All were to be tested by the close of the campaign. Several years later Miles wrote of his assessment of the new doctor that was to become one of his favorite officers:

I have found at Fort Huachuca a splendid type of American manhood, Captain Leonard Wood, Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Army. He was a young officer, age 24, fair haired, blue eyed man of great

intelligence, and sterling, manly qualities. He was perhaps as fine a specimen of physical strength and endurance as could easily be found.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of the campaign, only Lawton and Wood remained of the original detachment that had departed Fort Huachuca. The entire officer and enlisted strength had to be replaced due to sickness, injury, battles with the Indians and Mexicans, or physical exhaustion as the pursuit proved a test of human endurance. Persistent losses eventually left the infantry company in Lawton's command without any assigned officers. Wood volunteered and Lawton put him in charge of the company for the rest of the campaign.<sup>6</sup> Despite unbelievable suffering, they finally caught up with Geronimo, having marched over 1400 miles across "the wildest and most rugged country in America."<sup>7</sup> During the pursuit, Wood was bitten by a tarantula and had fallen seriously ill. Still, he continued to lead his company as their commander, care for the other soldiers as doctor, and treat his own painful infection. Finally, the exhausted patrol, with Wood present, was able to force Geronimo's surrender to General Miles on September 3, 1887, at Skeleton Canyon, Arizona.

Official reports and personal letters of Miles and Lawton extol the efforts of Leonard Wood on this campaign. In a letter to General Miles, Lawton said:

Concerning Dr. Wood, I can only repeat what I have said to you, that his services during that trying campaign were of the highest order. I speak particularly of services other than those devolving upon him as a medical officer; services as a combat or line officer, voluntarily performed. He sought the most difficult and

dangerous work, and by his determination and courage, rendered a successful issue in the campaign possible.<sup>8</sup>

In his official report, Lawton again cited Wood's service, courage, and leadership:

I invite the attention of the Department Commander to Assistant Surgeon Leonard Wood, the only officer who was with me through the whole campaign. His courage, energy, and loyal support during the whole time; his encouraging example to the command; his confidence and belief in the final success of the expedition and his untiring efforts to make it so, have placed me under obligations so great that I cannot even express them.<sup>9</sup>

Miles, in his report to the Commanding General in Washington, also highlighted Wood's service.

Leonard Wood, Assistant Surgeon, volunteered to perform extraordinary hazardous and dangerous service...For his gallantry in the surprise and capture of Geronimo's camp, I recommend he be brevetted for his services.<sup>10</sup>

These two officers played greatly in the development of Wood. As for Lawton, a fellow Harvard graduate who would later die in the Philippines, Wood found a valuable mentor.

It was of inestimable value to Wood to be associated with such a man in his early career. Both were born leaders, both soldiers by nature. Wood learned much of military art from him and of the skill of more complex and difficult art of handling men of all types under trying conditions.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps more valuable was the relationship between Miles and Wood. General Miles became a true admirer of his doctor-soldier. Through the years of their association, Miles would come to play

a pivotal role in Wood's move up the Army career ladder. However, it did not go unnoticed that only Wood received Miles' recommendation for the Congressional Medal of Honor for the Geronimo campaign. Though Wood's efforts were commendable, the citation (see APPENDIX B) became "the subject of considerable discussion" among other veteran infantry and cavalry officers in the Southwest. Most felt Lieutenant Gatewood (who was the officer to actually negotiate Geronimo's surrender), Captain Crawford (who was killed in the pursuit), or Captain Lawton, himself, should have received the medal.<sup>12</sup> While there was some discussion of this in the general force, none of the participants in the actual pursuit ever questioned the award.

The campaign also offered the medical officer the first opportunity to challenge the wisdom of the well ensconced Bureaus in Washington, D. C. In a step that would soon become a trademark of Leonard Wood, he wrote directly to the source as he saw it. His bold step in documenting Bureau failures in an official report to the War Department would later manifest itself in contemptuous by-passing of the chain of command in later confrontations. His report on the Geronimo campaign brought his accusations against the Quartermaster and Subsistence Bureaus. He challenged their shoddy support to the field Army. Though not directly charging the Bureaus with dereliction of duty, he clearly pointed out their poor provisioning of the force.

The uniform is totally unfit for duty where hard work is to be done on our southern border.... A cavalry soldier with his heavy clothing and clumsy boots is unable to do more than a portion of the



work he can do if properly dressed.... The shoes are unfit for field service, wearing out in five or six days.... The bacon is almost entirely fat and generally inedible....<sup>13</sup>

Leonard Wood had seen that dedicated, trained, and physically fit soldiers were capable of withstanding severe hardship and still accomplish the mission. As a result of surviving the desert campaign, he found his own physical state to be superior which had saved him during the severest trials of the march. He took confidence in the knowledge that, man for man, he was probably the most physically fit officer in the command. He saw, however, that provisioning of the Army, and the readiness and fitness of the general force had suffered greatly in the years after the Civil War. The successful campaign carried with it the observation that "thirty Indians had consumed the time, energy, and material of more than two thousand soldiers."<sup>14</sup> Though unable to affect immediate changes, he would capture these events in his memory and they would color his perception of the readiness of the field army for the rest of his career. Wood's critical observations of 1885 to 1887 turned out to be serious premonitions of things to come.

By the time Leonard Wood left the Southwest, he had clearly established a reputation of performance with which few could argue. He demonstrated individual courage and undeniable endurance in an extremely harsh environment. Most importantly, his first experience in command was a total success. "It indicated not only how naturally he assumed responsibility, but

also how much he had learned about field service."<sup>15</sup>

### Coming to Washington

After the Geronimo campaign, Leonard Wood was posted to several installations across the United States for the next nine years. Each assignment had its own rewards as Wood used his physical prowess and boundless energy to perform all duties in a most notable manner. He also added to his growing list of loyal mentors of senior officers and politicians.

General Miles had the young doctor moved to his personal staff in the Presidio of San Francisco. Besides running marathons and leading soldiers on forced marches, he met and married Louise Condit-Smith, a ward of United States Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field. All members of the Supreme Court were at their wedding on 22 October 1891. Wood's base of influential friends and family was truly becoming significant. The Woods had three children, two sons and a daughter. Both sons served in the Army during World War I.<sup>16</sup>

While assigned to Fort McPherson, he was able to coach and play for the Georgia Tech football team by enrolling in the University's woodworking course.<sup>17</sup> He never stopped at the opportunity to challenge himself, his soldiers, or his team. Instead, he constantly pushed himself and everyone around him to perform at the peak of their endurance. He was convinced that the fitness of one's body was directly related to successful

performance in all other endeavors.

But the stagnant state of the Army in the 1890s greatly distressed Captain Wood. He saw no future in the Medical Corps and began to look at other careers. He found life in Georgia "disgusting" and remarked in his diary that Fort McPherson was a "dull and stupid post, absolutely without interest."<sup>18</sup>

His duties were light and he found ample time to devote himself to family and sports. But he could not help realizing that he was marking time like most of his fellow officers. He was passing through that unpleasant stage which most Army officers well know when they are speculating on leaving the service. Indeed, he had made up his mind that "if nothing happened" before he was forty (1890) he would resign.<sup>19</sup>

General Miles became the Army's last "Commanding General" and he quickly arranged for his favorite doctor to be posted to Washington, D.C. Wood's performance in the Indian campaigns and a deep personal friendship had been reinforced when Wood saved Miles' leg from amputation. Besides serving as doctor to the commanding general, Wood also became the physician to Washington's power elite. One way or another, he managed to meet "everyone worth meeting -- Cabinet officials, senior officers in the Army and Navy, Senators, ministers from foreign parts. Olney, the Secretary of State took a special liking to him, and the President himself became aware of him."<sup>20</sup>

This was the turning point in his career. From frontier doctor, Wood had suddenly become doctor to the most powerful men

in the United States Government. He was not about to pass up the chance to do his best for his patients and also for himself, by cashing in on his connections to Washington's very important persons to enhance his own position.

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I will give to the selfless performance of my duty and my mission the best that effort, thought, and dedication can provide. I will not only seek continually to improve knowledge and practice of my profession, but I will exercise the authority entrusted to me by the President and the Congress with fairness, justice, patience, and restraint... acting with candor and integrity to earn the unquestioning trust of my fellow soldiers -- juniors, seniors and associates -- and employing my rank and position not to serve myself but to serve my country and my unit...I will put loyalty to the highest moral principles above loyalty to my personal interest.

The Officer's Creed  
1970<sup>1</sup>

am-bi-tion, n. 1. An ardent desire for rank, fame, or power. 2. The will or desire to succeed or achieve a particular goal.

Webster's Third New International  
Dictionary

#### CHAPTER V: LEONARD WOOD AS LEADER -- RISE TO GENERAL

##### War with Spain

During his tour in Washington, D. C., in service to the various leaders of government, Leonard Wood became acquainted with the two primary principles of American expansionist thought: making the United States dominant in the Western Hemisphere and putting it at least on an equal footing with the other world powers in the Far East. The arrival of the Republican President, William McKinley, and his administration culminated a decade of this rising expansionist energy and sought to overcome the

unhappy state of business and politics in the mid 1890s. Among this new administration was a New York politician who "came to Washington looking for a war."<sup>2</sup> At an address to the Navy War College in 1896, the outspoken Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, said:

I regard war with Spain from two view points. First, the advisability, on the ground of humanity and self interest, of interfering on behalf of the Cubans and taking one more step toward the complete freedom of America from European domination; and, second, the benefit done to our people by giving them something to think of which isn't material gain and especially the benefit done our military forces by trying both the army and the navy in actual practice.<sup>3</sup>

Leonard Wood and Theodore Roosevelt met in June 1897 as a part of Wood's social mingling with the Washington power elite facilitated by his duties and his wife's uncle on the Supreme Court. They became fast friends for life, drawn together by a need for harsh physical exercise, admiration of adventure in the American west, mutual ability to tell tall tales (Roosevelt of his police adventures in New York and Wood of his Indian campaigns), and the shared frustration that nothing was happening to resolve the issues America faced in the Caribbean and Pacific. Wood, besides daily visits to the White House to care for the invalid Mrs. McKinley, became a daily companion of the Roosevelts. Their energy and attention became focused on Cuba.

When war came in 1898, Wood and Roosevelt both looked for a way to join the fight. Wood had no intention of going as a medical doctor but as a soldier of the line. Events that would

change the course of Leonard Wood's life began to move swiftly.

Congress authorized three regiments of cavalry be formed "to be composed exclusively of frontiersmen possessing qualifications as horsemen and marksmen."<sup>4</sup> Both Wood (through his numerous political contacts) and Roosevelt sought appointment as volunteer officers of the line in the new units. Secretary of War Alger offered command of one of the regiments to Roosevelt but he declined. Roosevelt later wrote, "Alger told me to accept the colonelcy and that he would make Wood Lieutenant Colonel, but I answered that I did not want to rise on any man's shoulders."<sup>5</sup>

Roger Wolcott, the Massachusetts governor, eventually appointed Wood as colonel of volunteers in May 1898. Despite McKinley's protestations that it was a time for "cool heads and cautious tongues"<sup>6</sup> and serious concern for his sick wife should her doctor leave on this adventure, the President relented to Wood's desire to join the war. Shortly thereafter Roosevelt was made a Lieutenant Colonel in the volunteers. Together, the doctor and the politician organized the First United States Volunteer Cavalry, the Rough Riders.

### The Rough Riders

The mobilization of the Army for the Spanish-American War is a full study in itself. In the doldrums of frontier living up to the very last months before actual fighting, the Army jumped from 25,000 to 200,000 in less than half a year.<sup>7</sup> Regular soldiers,



new volunteers, and a few National Guard units found themselves heading for Florida debarkation ports in spite of mounting confusion, a peacetime bureaucracy mentality, and an appalling dearth of supplies and equipment. Life for Leonard Wood and his second in command, Roosevelt, was no better or worse than any other soldier or unit in the Army at the time except that these two men seemed to bring a certain synergy to their command.

Neither Wood nor Roosevelt possessed any formal training for their job. Except for his undermanned infantry company during the Geronimo campaign, Wood had no command experience. He had read a great deal on military science and studied the standard manuals.

If Wood's training was minimal, Roosevelt's was nonexistent. Never reluctant to extol his own virtues, he strained to list his main command qualifications: "experience in dealing with groups of men, three years in the New York militia, and service as a sheriff in cow country."<sup>8</sup>

But what these two lacked in formal military training and line experience, they more than made up in a mutual, dynamic, close working relationship. They were intelligent, courageous, and capable of sound judgements. They possessed exceptional executive ability, were physically fit, and had an almost unlimited capacity for exhausting work.<sup>9</sup> Accepting with chagrin the publicity that followed his unit as it grew together due to the notoriety of his executive officer (some even referred to the First Volunteers as "Roosevelt's Regiment"), Wood quietly went about to recruit, form, and train his unit. "Wood was the presiding genius in camp. Roosevelt was learning to be and was not afraid that someone would find it out."<sup>10</sup>

Wood, who had kept abreast of equipment, clothing, and arms developments, and mindful of his experience in Arizona and the painful Indian campaign, set to equip his soldiers as best as possible. Rather than the Army's hot woolen blue uniforms, he procured light, cotton, khaki uniforms. He ensured that his soldiers would be armed with the new Krag-Jorgensen .30 caliber rifles that used a five round magazine and smokeless cartridges, and instead of bayonets, the Rough Riders were issued machetes. Wood and Roosevelt struggled to keep their rambunctious unit of cowboy volunteers together, and by the time supplies arrived, they had only 21 days to drill in Arizona to forge the beginnings of a fighting force before leaving for Florida.

At the port of Tampa there was much confusion in a mass of men, equipment, and vessels. Wood proved impatient at the delays. Roosevelt reported:

After an hour's industrious and rapid search through this antheap of humanity, Wood and I, who had been separated, found Colonel Humphrey at the same time and were allotted transport, the Yucatan. But she was out in midstream, so Wood seized a stray launch and we boarded her instead.<sup>11</sup>

Once in Cuba, Wood's performance in battle was again outstanding. Reports attest to his courage and leadership. The old Confederate, Major General Joseph Wheeler, in charge of United States cavalry in Cuba, reported:

The magnificent and brave work done by the regiment under the lead of Colonel Wood testifies to his courage and skill. The energy and determination of this officer had been marked from the moment he reported to me in Tampa, and I have

abundant evidence of his brave and good conduct on the field and I recommend him for consideration of the Government.<sup>12</sup>

Wood's brigade commander, Brigadier General Samuel B. M. Young, went down with yellow fever shortly after the first engagement at Las Guasimas, which was unfortunate for Young but an absolutely monumental opportunity for Wood. Wood was made brigade commander and Roosevelt assumed command of the Rough Riders as the San Juan Hill Battle commenced on 1 July 1898. After he left the field, Young wrote his report which also attested to Wood's exceptional performance in battle. "I cannot speak too highly of the efficient manner in which Colonel Wood handled his regiment and his magnificent behavior on the field."<sup>13</sup>

Wood's performance in commanding the brigade was again inspirational. Despite mounting casualties, withering fire, and the dense jungle growth which channelized soldiers into deadly killing zones, Wood seemingly remained calm and deliberate throughout the battle. He formed skirmish lines, personally led assaults, gave firm and direct orders, and showed a doctor's compassion to the wounded as he crossed and recrossed the battlefield. He remained upright though bullets passed about him. Wood wrote to his wife of the experience:

I was in command along the entire line where most of the Spanish troops were assembled and had a pretty busy time. Dear old Charles Augustus [his horse], weak and leg weary, was led by me during the entire fight and how he escaped is little less than a miracle as three of my staff officers and the 'Journal' correspondent, Mr Marshall, were

shot down very near me. I suppose the sight of the horse attracted fire, I had to have him as I had to cover nearly a mile of front and might have to move along from one place to another rapidly. Praise God we won the fight.<sup>14</sup>

Wood found himself with two emotions after the war -- great elation in the fulfillment of the American destiny and great disgust in the performance of the Army organization (as opposed to the conduct of the individual soldier which he always admired). To the fulfillment of the country's destiny, he wrote:

Hard as it is to realize that this is the commencement of a new policy and that this is the first great expedition our country has ever sent overseas and marks the commencement of a new era in our relations with the world.<sup>15</sup>

But he was also especially frustrated with the failure of America to field an Army and to fight as a world power. From Florida he wrote:

On our arrival at Tampa, we found everything confused and in a most frightful mix. Confusion. Confusion. Confusion. Why, it is an advertisement to foreigners of our absolutely unprepared condition.<sup>16</sup>

After his heroic fight and battlefield promotion to brigade commander, Wood remained frustrated with the conduct of the war. The march through the jungle and the waste of life in deadly battles with piecemeal commitment of forces seldom supported by artillery, left Wood commenting it was "absolutely sickening" and "a howling farce."<sup>17</sup>

For his performance on the battlefield and his role as brigade commander, Wood received commission as a brigadier

general in the volunteers on 9 July 1898. Two weeks later, General William R. Shafter, commander of United States Army in Cuba, placed Wood in charge of the city of Santiago. General Leonard Wood's spectacular rise in power and prestige had begun.

### Governor in Cuba

The end of the Spanish-American War signaled the end of the influence of the government of Spain in the Western Hemisphere. It also thrust an America ill prepared for the imperial role into the colonial business. With no clearly stated policy, the United States found itself not only with Cuba and the Philippines, but also Puerto Rico, islands in the West Indies, and, as a result of annexation at the war's end, the islands of Hawaii. Wood found himself as the military governor of Santiago with a city in sanitary ruin, without a clear statement of the future of Cuba in American policy. Wood, never a man of patience, leapt to his duties as fitting a doctor, engineer, and general. The orders he received were simple:

The Commanding General directs you take charge of the City of Santiago and see that the order and quiet are observed -- arrest all disturbers of the peace, and permit no armed men to enter the city except such of our own men as they come on duty.<sup>18</sup>

But the city was a disaster. Streets were littered with unburied dead. Refuse, sewage, and decay filled the city. A merchant captain said the city "could be smelt ten miles out to sea."<sup>19</sup> He moved quickly to clean the city, restore services and

quell the epidemic of disease and death. Ruthless in his dealings, he had neither the time nor the patience to deal with those, Spanish or American, who showed the slightest hesitation in the execution of his orders or the maintenance of his policies.

It was a hard time and it took a hard leader to exert an uncompromising authority in his realm. Leonard Wood rose to the occasion. More than his battlefield accomplishments, which were most commendable in their own right, his role as administrator of first the city of Santiago, then the Santiago Province, and later as the Military Governor of the entire island of Cuba, is one of truly great accomplishments in the annals of the Army. Wood's accomplishments came from his personal feelings and energy rather than American policy and reveal he had fully embraced the expansionist philosophy and strong racial belief in America's superiority. His Chief of Staff, and later General, Adna R. Chafee wrote of Wood:

He entered his duties with a clear vision impressed with the idea that he had a mission to establish in a Latin military colony a republic modeled closely upon the lines of our own great Anglo-Saxon republic. Such an efficient society would lay the foundation for a permanent and mutually advantageous Cuban-American partnership, perhaps culminating in outright annexation by the United States.<sup>20</sup>

Wood saw no energy in the defeated and long subjugated Cubans and no cooperation or enthusiasm by the remaining upper class in Cuba. As he summarized his job to his friend President McKinley:

The passive inactivity of one hundred and fifty years has settled over the people and it is hard to get them out of old ruts and old grooves. We are dealing with a race that has steadily been going down for hundreds of years and into which we have got to infuse new life, new principles, and new methods of doing things.<sup>21</sup>

He was extremely distressed at what he saw throughout the island. To him Cuba was

too exploited by Spain and too ravaged by war to act as an agent of its own salvation. In his view, America was best suited to provide the help with the American forces on occupation duty. What Cuba needed, he said, was "a government of the people, for the people, by the people under American military supervision."<sup>22</sup>

Reports by admirers and detractors of the service of Leonard Wood cannot minimize the general's achievements in the face of overwhelming odds.

If ever in this world the extraordinary man, the man of destiny, the man of preeminent powers of resource was needed it was in Santiago, Cuba. In General Wood was found a man who by nature, education, and experience, combined in himself a generous share of the special skill of physician, soldier, and statesman.<sup>23</sup>

Within months noticeable changes were seen and soon one of the foulest cities in Cuba had been cleaned, the death rate controlled, many public works efforts underway, and business recovering with confidence.<sup>24</sup> Even the anti-imperialist New York Evening Post cautiously joined those praising Wood's accomplishments. "Perhaps with men of Wood's caliber some honor could be salvaged from a thoroughly dishonorable policy. President McKinley, keep on giving us men like General Wood."<sup>25</sup>

With his assumption of duties as Commander of the Province of Santiago upon the relief of his old Indian fighter friend General Lawton, Wood was made a major general of volunteers in December 1898. The doctor had moved from captain in the Medical Corps moving through Washington's social and political circles to a two star general of the line in less than eight months. A significant rise based partly on contacts and powerful friends, but surely a fair share of achievement helped, too. But herein lay the first of Wood's many serious challenges and the rise of controversy in his career.

### Controversy in Cuba

While he struggled for more than a year to develop the U. S. policy on America's new colonies, McKinley restructured the military government in Cuba in December 1899. He made Wood military governor of Cuba, replacing Major General John R. Brooke after Brooke's series of confrontations with his politically connected subordinate. Leonard Wood had sought autonomy in his dealings in Santiago, free from what he called "interference" by his department commander. The power struggle between the conservative old Civil War veteran and the progressive energetic doctor-general was a serious crisis in authority and respect for the chain of command. Though his actions bordered on



insubordination, Wood survived the controversy, though it took his full collection of friends and powerful contacts. It was a public, embarrassing fight, documented in the press, not the last of such events in Wood's career.

The controversy continued to dog Wood's efforts for the duration of his tour in Cuba. Further, growing resentment by the regular army officers over the rapid rise of the captain of the Medical Corps, some ill-taken actions by his subordinates, a serious postal fraud case involving Republican party stalwarts in gouging the Cuba markets, public squabbles with his subordinate department commanders, and charges of fiscal mismanagement fell hard on Wood's reputation as he continued to operate almost totally without guidance from Washington. Wood even went so far as to hire a public relations agent -- not the last of this tactic either -- to "lobby in Washington for his cause."<sup>26</sup>

Wood's failure to follow Brooke's directives, seeing his superior as more of an impediment to progress than catapult to progress, was directly countered by Wood's own expectations of his subordinates. He demanded absolute obedience and expected total subordination to him. Wood expected, and often demanded, that his friends in high places come to his aid in a version of public and political relations damage control in recurring crises. Yet he was quick to drop and discipline his subordinates who, through design or naivety, put their boss in an embarrassing predicament. Though a genuinely compassionate man in private, Wood's only loyalty in public service was that which furthered

his own personal goals. The situation was fueled by a press that was truly divided into two polarized camps by the yellow journalism of the past decade. There was the Republican biased expansionist press, basically Wood supporters, and an equally exaggerating, Democratically oriented press that saw evil in America's, and Wood's, colonial experiment. Unfortunately there was no lack of fuel for either's fire.

The issue over Wood's rank was a case in point. The fact that Wood was a protege of President McKinley and the politically powerful Roosevelt caused the professional officers to openly grumble at Wood's popularity, his rapid rise in rank, and his apparent disregard for professional army superiors and subordinates when it came to his personal gain. About this time, Wood's provisional appointment in the volunteers was about to expire (as were all the temporary appointments of officers of the Spanish-American War). McKinley intended to appoint Wood a brigadier of the line to preserve his authority and stature as Cuba's military governor. As McKinley saw it, if Wood had to revert to his rank of Medical Corps captain he could no longer serve in Cuba, let alone as military governor. The President, the Boston Globe reported:

had the entire regular army and navy and all the members of the military committee of the Senate arrayed against him in his elevation of his personal physician over the heads of 509 other senior officers.<sup>27</sup>

Again Wood found a champion in the power circles of Washington. The new Secretary of War, Elihu Root, had become a

staunch supporter of the governor in Cuba.

There developed in their relations a kind of unsentimental fellowship. They were profoundly alike: Root predominately intellect, Wood predominately character; Root composed, solitary, serene; Wood restless, ambitious, intuitive, and strong to act. Both were individualists, self-reliant, and creative; leaders of men; both had courage, self assurance, devotion, love of country, and they complemented each other's qualities; the man of thought, the man of action; the lawyer-administrator; the physician-soldier.<sup>28</sup>

With Root's strong support, and the popular support Wood enjoyed as the result of his real accomplishments, Wood survived the promotion controversy. The Senate eventually confirmed his promotion as a brigadier general in the regular army with no dissenting votes.

Wood's role in Cuba was drawing to a close but he remained dissatisfied with the drift of American policy. He saw that Cuba's only chance of survival was annexation by the United States in order to assure the blessings of strategic location and industrial and agricultural potential. He "did not think the U. S. withdrawal would be permanent. Up to the last, he had seized on any small indications of opinion to construe them as signs of an extremely strong sentiment for annexation."<sup>29</sup> It was not to be, however, and on May 19, 1902, General Leonard Wood presided at the ceremony lowering the American flag for the last time in Cuba and turning over the island to its first president, Tomas Estrada Palma. It was a disappointing day for an individual committed to the expansionist movement.

Wood left Cuba as America's most influential soldier. With

McKinley's assassination and Roosevelt's assumption to the Presidency, with Elihu Root and other strong advocates in government, and with a growing public awareness and support from the general population, Wood in 1902 had many influential friends in the most powerful places. Roosevelt said that Wood "made more than any other man in the nation out of the Spanish War."<sup>30</sup> He had exhibited a knack and an ability to get things done.

The authority of the military governor was admittedly broad but it was Wood's dominant personality which gave the military government its driving force. He established himself above officers who had only recently outranked him. Those who did not easily subordinate themselves to Wood's authority were reassigned. Those who served him loyally were given full reign to carry out their work.<sup>31</sup>

Wood had achieved fame, stature, and military rank beyond even his own expectations. But his appetite was wetted. He left Cuba as American's youngest general on active duty. Buoyed by his accomplishments, protected by powerful politicians, personal friends, and family in Washington; supported by an extremely loyal, though small, group of staff officers; and, receiving more than his share of favorable press reports, Wood moved from Cuba not content with his past successful career but intent on more accomplishments and greater glory.

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We haven't the appearance, goodness knows, of plain  
commercial men;  
From a hasty glance, you might suppose we are  
fractious now and then;  
But though we come in warlike guise and battle-front  
arrayed,  
It's all a business enterprise;  
We're seeking foreign trade.

We're mild as any turtle dove  
When we see the foe a-coming,  
Our thoughts are set on human love  
When we hear the bullets humming.  
We teach the native population  
What the golden rule is like,  
And we scatter public education  
On every blasted hike.

George Ade, The Sultan of Sulu  
1903

A Broadway satire on the American role  
in the Philippines

Blood, race, tradition, trade, and a host of other  
influences, capped by ambition to go on to lead, to  
expand, will always produce strife.

Leonard Wood<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI: LEONARD WOOD AS ADMINISTRATOR IN THE PHILIPPINES

### The Moro Province

Wood was posted as Military Commander of the Department of Mindanao and first military governor of the Moro Province in 1903. The Moros, a predominately Moslem sect of over 400,000, had frustrated the Spaniards in their attempt to control the fiercely independent tribes. The change in ruling colonial power



had not calmed the Moros, and their continued fighting for independence was an embarrassment to the United States authorities. Wood, faced with a serious challenge in subduing the Moro insurgency, saw the posting to a mere province as a demotion from his island-wide authority in Cuba. But Roosevelt pointed out that at the proper time, Wood would be named commander of the Philippine Division. The assignment would provide his first real line command and the "prospects of a division command made the arrangement very appealing."<sup>2</sup>

Almost immediately upon arrival, Wood sought action to establish his authority and elicit subjugation of the Moros to his liking. Within a week, driven as always by enormous store of impatient energy, the new governor was trekking through the interior of the province accompanied by a battalion of infantry. "What is needed," wrote Wood, "and all that is needed to bring the Moro into line and to start him ahead is a strong policy and a vigorous enforcement of the law."<sup>3</sup>

Wood, as did all the other officers, held the Moro in very low esteem. They were no more than "oriental equivalents of the American Indian and not nearly the fighting men of the Sioux and Cheyenne."<sup>4</sup> To his wife, Wood wrote "The Moro are on a level of our poorer Indians so far as fighting goes. They are not a dangerous enemy."<sup>5</sup> Fresh from victory in Cuba and having subdued the Indians in the Southwest, the Moros were seen as a threat to be easily disposed. However, the Moros in 1903 were "unbroken, independent, and disinclined to accept American domination."<sup>6</sup>

Still Wood was confident in his soldiers' ability to discipline the insurgents. He felt that it would take only one punitive expedition to bring the rabble into line. He worked both his staff and himself into a racial hatred of the Moro. In his official report he said:

The Moros of this section are as a class a treacherous unreliable lot of slave hunters and land pirates. Our conciliatory and good-natured policy with them resulted in their conviction that we were both cowardly and weak, and out of this conviction grew an absolute contempt for our authority. Firmness and the prompt application of disciplinary measures will maintain order. Moros for the first time must understand that the United States stands for authority, order, and government.<sup>7</sup>

At the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in the Philippines, Brigadier General John Bates had established what became known as the Bates Agreement with the Moros that specified: (1) the Moro Sultan recognized America's authority in exchange for the American's protection of his subjects, (2) America would pay the Sultan a personal annuity, (3) American would respect the Sultan's jurisdiction over criminal matters involving only Moros, and (4) American recognized Moro customs including their practice of slavery.<sup>8</sup> In Moro culture, it was pointed out to Wood on his arrival, human life and property were held in esteem proportional to their monetary value. A free man's life was worth fifty-two dollars in gold, a male slave was worth twenty-six dollars, a female was worth thirteen dollars, and a modern rifle was worth over two hundred dollars.<sup>9</sup> Despite the existence of the agreement, the only part that seem to be

working was the Sultan's collection of his annuity.

Two months after his arrival, Wood asked Washington to formally abrogate the Bates Agreement. To some, the termination of the agreement was a repeat of the often practiced treaty breaking with the American Indians in the preceding century. But to Wood, it merely marked the shift in American policy from "accomodation to forcible reconstruction of Moro society to American standards."<sup>10</sup> As far as Wood was concerned, the Sultan deserved no respect from America. He wrote Roosevelt that "He [the Sultan] is a run down tricky little oriental degenerate with half a dozen wives and no children, a state of affairs of which I am sure you thoroughly disapprove."<sup>11</sup>

Wood's actions galvanized rather than defeated Moro resistance and soon he had a full scale guerilla war on his hands. While Wood was governor of the Moro Province, his soldiers were to engage in battle with the insurgents over one hundred times. It was a terrible war with America firepower decisive, especially Wood's preference to shell selected Moro settlements and fortresses in submission with artillery. By the time Wood left, thousands of Moro men, women, and children were killed and one hundred Moro settlements destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

### The Jolo Campaign

The Jolo Campaign illustrates the severity with which Wood practiced his pacification and "restructuring" of the Moros. In

November 1903, shortly after his arrival in the Philippines, Wood launched an expedition to the Island of Jolo in the Sulu Sea to capture Panglima Hassan, one of the Moro chieftains of the Tausug tribe. His soldiers were brutal in their conduct of the operation. Major Lee Bullard wrote that the tactic was to apply a "liberal use of ammunition" on the villages or any suspected Moro gathering place before going in. The indiscriminate killing was seen as expedient and necessary. "This free use of ammunition, to be condemned in warfare with civilized foes, I have found to bring very excellent results against Philippine semi-savages."<sup>13</sup>

Eventually Hassan was captured and brought before Wood who sat in one of Hassan's own chairs in front of the Chiefs burned out house. After a terse exchange, Hassan was off to prison. Later he escaped and was killed by U. S. forces. Wood reported to Washington the success of his first campaign to destroy insurgent resistance and acknowledged 500 Moros killed. However, in his diary, Wood recorded "from 1000 to 1200 killed, including many Tausug women and children who were killed in the battle as they were mixed up with the men."<sup>14</sup> The Americans had lost one killed and eight wounded and captured tons of gunpowder and eighty-three cannon of various vintages.<sup>15</sup> Wood felt the Tausug would never again be able to assemble a force against the Americans.

Wood reported the November 12th "battle" to the new Secretary of War Taft, himself recently the Governor of the

Philippines, as an attack of "between 2000 and 3000 armed Moros against United States troops. This is an act of treachery and rebellion" and offered "ample proof that the Moro no longer held to the Bates Agreement" and the United States rejection of the treaty was justified.<sup>16</sup>

Taft responded:

I congratulate you on the disposition of affairs that you have made in Jolo. I have no doubt that the Moros richly deserve the punishment you gave them and the fact of their humiliating defeat will work great good in our relations with them.<sup>17</sup>

That Wood appeared to alter the facts of the "battle" in his reports, hid the high number of Moro casualties, and did not report the death of the many women and children, is an indication of another evolution of his leadership ethics and personality. Several factors had come together in his career at an especially delicate time. First, Wood had come to the Philippines not as a routine soldier, but as a celebrity of the late war and proven success as Cuban administrator. The press, the public, and his powerful friends in Washington looked forward to more great accomplishments, more sooner than later, in the Philippines. While others had been posted or assigned to the islands, Wood had arrived on a mission to subdue or "reconstruct" the Moro. Naturally impatient and mindful of his chorus of expecting onlookers, he felt driven to a quick decisive engagement of the classic order.

Second, the Moro Province gave Wood true command of regular army units as a regular line officer involved in a combat

campaign. He obviously felt compelled to add to his personal military reputation. "It was well understood throughout the service that the Army rewarded its officer for their fighting capacity more than their pacification efforts."<sup>18</sup> Wood's ambition was to achieve stature as a military commander in his own right, in his own theater, with his own soldiers, with an enemy that he believed he could vanquish with the vengeance of the evangelist of the American way. He had enough of "administrative" work, now he wanted "military" work and clearly, to him at least, "there was more career mileage to be gained from the Krag [the Krag Jorgensen .30 caliber military rifle] than from quinine."<sup>19</sup>

Third and foremost was Wood's pending promotion to major general. Ironically it was the retirement of his old mentor, General Miles, that opened the major general vacancy. Roosevelt had promised Wood the Philippine Division, a major general position. The President felt that he had to first secure the promotion for Wood and nominated his friend for the new rank shortly before Wood reported to Mindanao. The nomination set off "one of the most explosive debates of Roosevelt's administration."<sup>20</sup> A worried Roosevelt wrote:

My appointment of you as major general produced a perfect outcry from various newspapers...The southern democratic press is against you simply desirous of doing anything it can to annoy the administration...The mugwump papers have taken their cause from the Evening Post. One of the Post's charges is that your two brothers-in-law had contracts or something of the kind while you were governor [of Cuba].<sup>21</sup>

Other charges rained down on the nomination. If the regular line officers had chaffed at Wood's appointment as a brigadier general, they were absolutely livid at Roosevelt's nomination to make him a major general. Spurned old subordinates, envious fellow commanders from Cuba, his antagonistic old boss General Brooke, and an uncooperative Senate loomed as a formidable array of opposition against the nomination.

Soon charges were made against the whole of Wood's career. Senator Teller voiced doubts about Wood's Medal of Honor for one who "once merely lived with the possibility of gunfire. I had the idea that all soldiers are in danger of being fired on" he observed.<sup>22</sup> General James H. Wilson told the Senate that during the battle of San Juan Hill Wood was not at the front but in the rear, supposedly hunting delayed ammunition resupply.<sup>23</sup> Though proven false, the suspicions remained. All the old charges of financial mismanagement and blatant favoritism of the last war and governorship in Cuba were run out again.

Wood, of course, was furious. Upon arriving in Manila, he telegraphed Roosevelt:

If any single act indicating the slightest official irregularity or incompetency in military or civil matters while I was in command of the United States troops in Cuba and in charge of the affairs of the island can be established, I insist on meeting the charges either before a court martial or in any other way the President, the Congress, or the War Department may direct. I am so heartily tired of the systematic campaign to lying and misrepresentation...I want you to feel entirely at liberty to withdraw my nomination as major general if you deem such action expedient.<sup>24</sup>

Wood relied totally on his supporting cast of faithful mentors. Root, Taft, Roosevelt, and others continued to counter all charges on Wood's behalf, explaining away exaggerations with fact and clarifying rumors that continually sprang up. But the damage was being done to Wood's reputation. A friend in the War Department wrote the general that "The unfortunate part of this is that the general public does not know how extreme have been the variations from the truth...."<sup>25</sup>

When at last the promotion was confirmed the Philadelphia Press wrote "every accusation made against the integrity of Leonard Wood has fallen to pieces...he emerges from this ordeal with a clean bill of health."<sup>26</sup> However, the real damage soon manifested itself.

Roosevelt now felt that giving Wood the Philippine Division could not closely follow such a serious political fight. The President wrote Wood "you must stay in Mindanao for some time to come.... Everything must be avoided which will have the least appearance of pushing you at the expense of anyone else."<sup>27</sup> General Henry C. Corbin was sent to assume the duties of division commander. Wood neither understood nor appreciated how hard Roosevelt and others had worked for him, nor did he feel that the Congressional and media debate should have any influence over what he felt was an assignment that was rightfully his. He was furious and instead of showing any appreciation to all those who had rallied to his defense, he wrote a bitter, hard hitting letter to Roosevelt. The President was stunned that his friend



was so insensitive. He forwarded Wood's letter to Root with a note saying in part:

I have just heard from Wood, a sixteen page letter, not of gratitude and relief he was confirmed as major general, but of wild protest that he was not put in command of the Philippines.<sup>28</sup>

After discussing the Wood letter with Root and Taft, Roosevelt had a letter sent back to Wood stating that his confirmation was "due only to the straining of every nerve by this administration in a way in which it had been put forth for only one or two great causes since I have been President."<sup>29</sup>

Wood had also failed to appreciate the not so subtle change in public opinion. Before, he had been the doctor-general, distinguished leader and accomplished administrator. His transfer to the line a few years earlier had been seen by the public as the natural transition of a great soldier (an opinion not held by some senior officers). But now, the vindictiveness of the campaign of his enemies had portrayed the picture of a "conniving doctor-politician." Wood never again would enjoy the wide range of public support that had marked his preceding rise to power.

### The Bud Dejo Campaign

Two years later, another of Wood's punitive campaigns caused tremendous backlash and again seriously wounded the reputation of the new major general. On March 6, 1906, United States forces

began an assault of Bud Dejo, a mountain top crater fortress with over 600 Moros. Events again conspired to place Wood in the worst situation.

He was involved in planning a China expedition and had left all of the planning of the Bud Dejo assault to others. Brigadier General Tasker Bliss had recently arrived as Wood's replacement in the Moro Province but Wood and Bliss did not change command for another month. Wood was less concerned about Province affairs and, perhaps worst of all, he was now becoming seriously ill. He had a brain tumor. Though he had it operated on a year earlier, it was clear that the usual robustness of the Indian fighter was gone. In fact, on 7 March when both Wood and Bliss joined forces on the field to observe the final assault, "Wood was stricken with one of the seizures that plagued him for the last twenty years of his life. Despite the efforts of a staff officer to hold him in his saddle, the general collapsed on the ground. He remained merely an observer throughout the action."<sup>30</sup>

The battle turned to another massacre. Approximately 400 American soldiers, supported by two machine guns manned by sailors, and a battery of artillery captured the crater. There were no Moro survivors. Though the Americans suffered eighteen dead and fifty-three wounded, no count of Moro casualties was ever made. <sup>31</sup> But it was clear there were hundreds of dead. The final assault had been quick and furious.

"In ten minutes all the Moros in the crater were killed. A captain with a detachment joined the cleanup in the crater where they killed every Moro in sight. The Moro women held their children as

shields against the attackers. The dead lay piled five deep in their trenches."<sup>32</sup>

Wood reported to Roosevelt that the action "resulted in the extinction of a band of outlaws."<sup>33</sup> Roosevelt, in turn, congratulated Wood for a "brilliant feat of arms wherein you and the soldiers so well upheld the honor of the American flag."<sup>34</sup>

But three days later word of the scope of the massacre leaked to the press. Headlines read "Women and Children Killed in Moro Battle, President Congratulates Troops."<sup>35</sup> Again Wood underestimated the impact on the public of the attacks by the press on the government's policy in the Moro Province and his own personal conduct of the campaign. Another furor erupted between Wood, Congressional accusations and Presidential explanations, all debated publicly in the newspapers. Roosevelt, Taft, and the Republican party rallied to Wood's defense. Within a few months, however, the issue faded and Wood's career was saved. Now even Wood's closest supporters found his conduct questionable and his ingratitude for unquestioning loyalty by his mentors sorely distressed his powerful friends. These events would severely affect Wood's credibility on future issues.

Wood argued hard for a new Pacific national defense policy. He was faced with the

aftermath of American expansionism. The nation had extended its territorial interests into one of the world's most volatile areas and then refused to provide the resources to protect them or properly administer to their affairs."<sup>36</sup>

He saw the serious vulnerability of the Philippines, Hawaiian islands, and our other Pacific possessions. As early as 1907, Wood worried about Japanese interests in the Pacific.

But Wood's voice had been severely weakened and he failed to arouse the public to the exposed and defenseless position of our possessions in the Far East. Instead, the public became aroused at the excesses of expansionism and evils of the colonial empire.

Wood was philosophically and temperamentally unfit for the chore [of developing American policy in underdeveloped countries]. His attitude remained that of a turn of the century imperialist. He never for a moment believed that backward people were capable of self government. To Wood, native leaders who championed independence were foolish and misguided.<sup>37</sup>

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National preparedness means...first of all the moral organization of the people, an organization which creates in the heart of every citizen a sense of his obligation for service to the nation in time of war.

Leonard Wood  
1914<sup>1</sup>

That nation is a murderer of its people which sends them unprepared to meet those mechanized and disciplined by training.

"Light Horse" Harry Lee  
Revolutionary War<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER VII: CHIEF OF STAFF AND CONFRONTATION WITH WILSON

### Becoming Chief of Staff

Leonard Wood's role as strategic leader began when he became Chief of Staff in 1910. He was the Army's senior general at the relatively (for that time) young age of fifty. Taft was President and Dickenson was Secretary of War (Root was a United States Senator). Taft lacked the drive of Roosevelt or the vision of Wood when it came to national preparedness or roles for the national military strategy in the era of expansion. His reservation was mostly based on the political realities of the opposition from a Democratically controlled Congress. However, Wood clearly saw his role as Chief of Staff was to carry the message of preparedness to the Congress, and failing that, to the



American public. He had waged many public opinion fights (mostly for personal gain and promotion) in his short period in the center limelight. He saw the preparedness campaign as his greatest fight yet.

The new Chief of Staff found there were many critical issues to be resolved which addressed the future of the expansionist policy and the role of the Army in that policy. Among the problems confronting him were the question of posting troops to Hawaii, the appropriation for the army in the Philippines, fortifications at the Panama Canal, and, of course, his own preparedness of the Army.<sup>3</sup> But Wood had a reputation that preceded him and he was met by skepticism if not subdued hostility by the staff officers in Washington. Captain Johnson Hagood, Congressional Liaison Officer for the Chief of Staff (having served the previous Chief of Staff, Major General James F. Bell) met Leonard Wood on his first day in his new job.

What manner of man is this? Was this the Wood I had heard so much about? Was this the soldier of fortune, the pill roller become swashbuckler, the pretender, the usurper, the Rough Rider who trampled over friends and foes, the medicine man with the cure-all for the Army?<sup>4</sup>

Russell Weigley, the Army historian, gives credit for Wood reforms but also notes the atmosphere created by his arrival in Washington:

The next major advances in Army reform were ventured by a man who generated controversy as naturally as Root had commanded respect. But because he was the kind of man he was, Leonard Wood would have infuriated much of the Army if he had done no more than urge that infantrymen to go

on carrying rifles.<sup>5</sup>

To make matters worse, Wood's tumor had continued to grow. He underwent another operation in 1910 to scrape the fibrous growth from his brain. Blackouts, dizziness, and lameness repeatedly attacked the general. A less hearty man would have retired, but Wood pushed on, convinced that his physical strength and his intense concentration would overcome the painful and frustrating side affects. Less than thirty days after the operation he was back, working twelve to fourteen hours a day, six days a week, at what Wood called "routine work at the office."<sup>6</sup>

#### The McLachlan Amendment

Wood went about reforms, streamlining operations, searching out and eliminating duplication of effort, coordinating actions and constantly looking for ways to better the Army overall. In his enthusiasm he wasted no time in embroiling him in controversy with his President. In response to the McLachlan Amendment seeking the "state of the national defense," Wood, with the assistance of the War College Division, prepared a reply consisting of devastating statistics which painted a picture of a very sad state of affairs in the Army.

The Regular Army was fatally deficient in numbers, field guns, supplies, and projectiles; there was disorganization in the quartermaster and commissary departments. The Army lacked sufficient arms; it was not organized into the

brigades and divisions essential for war. The militia was in even worse condition.<sup>7</sup>

After checking with Dickenson, Wood left a copy in a sealed envelop with Taft's secretary, gave copies to Congress, and sent copies to several newspapers. Instantly there was negative reaction to Wood's reply. It was seen as a conspiracy on the part of the Army to "secure larger appropriations and was politically inexpedient and dangerous."<sup>8</sup> The result was calamitous for Wood.

Taft had Dickenson and Wood recover the original assessment for complete modification and all copies sent to the press were collected and destroyed. However Congress, sufficiently alerted called Wood to testify at the House Military Committee hearings. Wood, refusing to support the modified version, paraphrased the original reply in his testimony. Congress was in an uproar and Taft was furious that Wood had been so politically insensitive. He rebuked Wood and later, in a public speech, refuted Wood's statements saying "the nation's defenses are quite sufficient since there is not the slightest prospect of a war in any part o the world in which the United States could conceivably have a part."<sup>9</sup>

The damage to Wood's Congressional relations was severe. The new Chief of Staff desperately needed to establish some positive relationship with the Congressional leaders. Already encumbered by unfounded yet persistent accusations of fiscal mismanagement in Cuba, his persecution of the party leaders in

the mail fraud case, the emotional hearings over his promotion, and his open blatant exercise of his Republican affiliation, all tended to hamper his bipartisan effectiveness. The McLachlan Resolution issue further complicated Wood's problems. He was seen once again as being all too ready to take controversy to the press rather than address the issues with his own administration or Congress. Representative Tawney, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, called Wood a "war wolf and munitions maker."<sup>10</sup> Wood worried that instead of waking America to her needs, the political flap over the "Answer" had made a "feeble elegy designed not to rouse the jumpiest sleeper from his dreams."<sup>11</sup>

The Chief of Staff was tenacious. The old energy of the Indian fighter and years of frustration in Army inefficiency drove him in his actions. He was "a brilliant administrator, he could distinguish between the important and the unimportant. He could make prompt decisions. He knew how to select competent subordinates."<sup>12</sup> The visionary nonconformist gathered about him some of the brightest young minds in the Army, men of untraditional thought such as Captains Douglas MacArthur and Billy Mitchell to serve in his preparedness campaign.

The prevailing philosophy in American military thought was based on the writings of Upton. But Wood broke from the popular Upton:

Wood decided that to lift the Army from Uptonian despair he must reject Upton's view of the requirements for making a citizen soldier an effective soldier. He did not turn to the

National Guard, because while he rejected the need for prolonged training, one of the basic Uptonian premises, he persisted in another, the need for assimilation of citizen soldiers into the professional cadre. He believed, therefore, that the citizen reserve must be a thoroughly one without the state influence that characterized the National Guard, and tied more closely than the Guard to the Regular Army.<sup>13</sup>

#### With Secretary of War Stimson

Part of Wood's vision was of an Army Staff that supported the soldier and an organization capable to take the Army to war and win. There was not doubt that Leonard Wood was the "first effective Chief of Staff."<sup>14</sup> With the appointment of Henry L. Stimson as the new Secretary of War in 1911, the new team of Stimson and Wood became a reform minded energetic breath of fresh air in the Army bureaucracy.

Wood had already made three trips to Europe by 1911 and had seen the war preparations being made by the great European armies. He had seen the staff organizations and their plans for mobilization. He saw the need and the opportunity to enact reforms in this country and he had in Stimson a reliable, sage politician to work with and support these measures. But first it was necessary to break the power of the old traditionalists, who had as their champion in the Army Bureaus Major General Fred C. Ainsworth, the Adjutant General. Ainsworth proved to be a formidable obstacle to the Chief of Staff. In Congress there was

another foe of militarism, Representative James Hay, Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee. The ideological gap between Hay and Stimson and between Ainsworth and Wood, reflected in their opposing views on how the Army should be organized, was enormous."<sup>15</sup>

In relatively quick succession, Wood, with Stimson's able guidance and assistance, reorganized the General Staff into a more efficient structure, established the War College Division as the overall planning agency for war, developed mobilization procedures in 1911 and manpower policy statements in 1912 and 1913, and conducted a tactical reorganization of the field army into its first peacetime permanent division structure.<sup>16</sup> In all his efforts, however, Representative Hay did his best to limit the size and activities of the General Staff with substantial assistance from War Department traditionalists, chiefly General Ainsworth.

It was the power struggle between Ainsworth and Wood that established the supremacy of the Chief of Staff and Wood as the true leader of the Army. The Ainsworth-Wood confrontation is a historic battle of strong wills and absolute dedication to directly opposing concepts of running the Army. In the end, Ainsworth was forced to resign. It was a great victory for Leonard Wood.

When Wood was able to remove him [Ainsworth] from the scene he scored a moral triumph for the General Staff which previously had to give way to the bureau chiefs. The center of gravity of the War Department shifted from the bureaus to the General Staff. Having grasped the ascendancy, the

General Staff could now move on to ensure and consolidate its leadership.<sup>17</sup>

### President Wilson

The final two years of Wood's tour as Chief of Staff effectively terminated his career though, he would go on to serve for another thirteen years. When Woodrow Wilson became President in 1912, a new political hostility threatened the Army in general and Wood's preparedness campaign in particular.

Wilson tended to view advice from military officers as sinister attempts to undermine civilian control, and woe to those officers who seemed politically minded. Wilson had just conducted a bitter campaign against Roosevelt and Wood's intimacy with the old Rough Rider and his close ties to the Republican Party were well known.<sup>18</sup>

Wilson did approve of some initiatives of the Chief of Staff such as his student summer training camps. Despite the efforts Wood had put into this program and other preparedness measures, however, his relations with Wilson never improved. The new Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, was an avowed pacifist and anti imperialist, enacting policies that, to the progressives that Wood represented, were "confused, spineless, and unpatriotic."<sup>19</sup> At the end of his tour, Wood had become an anathema, a "partisan Republican and advocate of military strength in an administration that was not merely indifferent but suspicious of it."<sup>20</sup>

Wood left Washington to return to command of the Eastern Department and its headquarters on Governor's Island in New York.

### Fighting the Preparedness Campaign

In New York, Wood found increasing opportunities to further his preparedness campaign in direct opposition to Wilson's avowed intention to keep America out of World War I and America's military in its traditional conservative role. Shortly after the European war began in August 1914 Wilson reiterated his administration's opposition to increasing American military readiness. One week later, however, Wood, paraphrasing "Light Horse" Harry Lee, gave a speech accusing "a government is a murderer of its people which sends them to the field uniformed and untaught."<sup>21</sup> The instant public interpretation was that Wood had called the President the "murderer" of American youth. The Administration, furious at Wood's backhanded criticism of his commander in chief, but also mindful of Wood's political backing, countered with a directive that all officers were henceforth prohibited from giving "interviews, statements, discussions, or articles on the military situation in the United States."<sup>22</sup> The order simply had no effect on Wood's evangelism and he made over sixty more such speeches in the next twelve months.

There was talk for the first time of Wood as a possible presidential candidate for the 1916 elections. Wood apparently



did nothing to defuse the rumors. Captain Douglas MacArthur wrote his old boss from Vera Cruz expressing a growing feeling among his loyal inner core of supporters:

I miss the inspiration, my dear general, of your own clear-cut, decisive measures. I hope sincerely affairs shape themselves so that you will shortly take the field for the campaign, which if death does not call you, can have but one ending -- the White House.<sup>23</sup>

The summer of 1915 brought another of those events to Wood's career where his astute intention yet tragic omission combined for damaging results. Ex-President Roosevelt was invited to speak at one of the Plattsburg training camps in New York. Wood, sensitive, though not bowing to the desires of the administration, asked for and received a proposed text of his favorite politician's speech to edit. Wood asked that certain passages be removed regarding pacifists, Wilson's foreign policy, and the military's readiness. The speech was given as recommended, but the press was handed printed copies of the original version! The administration held Wood responsible for Roosevelt's derogatory comments. The General received a formal written admonishment from the Secretary of War, perhaps Wood's only friend in the Wilson Administration. Retractions and embarrassment were again the order of the day and Wood further deepened his ideological separation from his Commander in Chief. Though not a direct cause, this and other insubordinate instances significantly reduced Wood's influence and contributed to the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916, an Army

reorganization bill sponsored by Wood's political opponents. Though the Secretary of War resigned in protest, the bill was signed by the President. The General Staff was nearly legislated out of existence, reducing it to nineteen officers by 1917. It was prohibited from interfering with the bureaus. The Mobile Army Division was abolished. The bureaus ran the Army again. The preparedness movement sputtered as Americans believed the National Defense Act had secured their borders. In fact, Wood had become an accessory to the dismantling of the very reforms he, Root, and Stimson had worked so hard to implement.

#### World War I

Wood fell into a virtual Limbo as far as the administration was concerned. He was still politically powerful, albeit with seriously wounded influence. He was the champion of the Republican Party, the leading progressive in uniform, and, as Wood was often to remind the War Department, he was still the senior general in the Army. Eventually he was assigned to Camp Funston, Kansas, to train one of the divisions being called to duty for possible service in Europe. The assignment, far from fulfilling a demand of Wood's, was a decision to put Wood "at that at which the least political activity was possible."<sup>24</sup> Wood was dismayed, seeing conspiracy by all his old friends. He lashed out in his letters and articles at Generals Hugh Scott and Tasker Bliss, blaming them and not acknowledging any culpability

of his own for his troubles. However, assuming that the position would lead to commanding the units when they went to Europe, Wood worked hard at his duties in Kansas.

In May 1918, the 89th Division was alerted for movement to Europe. Just before the Division was to leave, Wood was relieved of command. Wood rushed to Washington to see the Secretary of War, Newton Baker.

In a stormy meeting the general protested that the method and timing of the relief order was humiliating, a discredit to any officer. Baker seemed stunned, muttered that insubordination was a factor. Wood replied if telling the truth was insubordination then he was indeed insubordinate.<sup>25</sup>

Wood requested and received an appointment to see the President. When the meeting took place, two very opinionated men faced each other with scarcely hidden contempt. Wood blamed his problems on the press. But when it was over, the decision stood. He returned to Camp Funston to train more soldiers. Bitterness filled the thoughts of both men. Wood said of Wilson, "It is extremely disagreeable for him to meet anyone who does not approach him as an oriental approaches his master." And Wilson in turn claimed that Wood "is an agitator, where he goes there is controversy and conflict. It is safer to have him here than on the war front."<sup>26</sup>

Secretary Baker, the last of the administration officials to have any sympathy with Wood in this time of Wood's obvious disappointment was embarrassed by the general one more time. Wood, at one of his speaking engagements, related some

confidential conversations which had taken place between the two of them. It seemed that he was unable to understand the impacts of his indiscretions. Exasperated, Baker wrote:

There seems to be a significant instance of insubordination on your part which I told you in our interview made it difficult to combine you with an organization of which you are not the head with any expectation of harmonious cooperation.<sup>27</sup>

Wood's career was effectively over. Some say he sacrificed it for readiness, that without his efforts the Army could not have responded to the demands of the World War I. Weigley commented on the impact of his career that:

If the United States were to muster an army appropriate for war in Europe, there was no escape from conscription. Facts imposed the method on Wilson, Congress, the Army, and the country, and Leonard Wood had done much to prepare the way.<sup>28</sup>

Wood's ardent admirers, loyal to the end, saw him as a martyr to the cause of preparedness and the tyranny of an administration unwilling to recognize the moral position of the government to ready her defense. In one of his darkest hours, Wood received another letter from his previous staff officer, Captain Douglas MacArthur:

When others beholden to you for high office desert you, I have fought for you. In fact, I think my voice has been the one [in the War Department] raised for you. I confirm my old pledge of complete and utter loyalty, a feeling that is based not only on the most devoted friendship and admiration, but upon the unshakable belief in the soundness of your views and the future of your policies. I have believed in the past and am more convinced by recent events that the day will come when you will be the hope of the nation, and when that day comes you will find me fighting behind

you as I always have in the past to the last ounce of my strength and ability.<sup>29</sup>

Wood felt that a conspiracy by the Wilson administration had robbed him of his destiny, command of the American forces in World War I. As a general in the strategic leadership role of Chief of Staff, and his subsequent role as division commander, he had been a stubbornly insubordinate officer. Campaigning in uniform, inconsiderate of position, responsibility, or ethical conduct, he belied the trust of his senior leadership duties.

"Strength of character" as Clausewitz observed "can degenerate into obstinacy."<sup>30</sup> Wood had squandered his authority and responsibility, and most importantly, his vision of a powerful, well organized, and efficient General Staff to coordinate the Bureaus. His vision was lost due to his misconduct. The "prophet of preparedness" had sounded the alarm for nearly eight years at the expense of his and many other careers. In the end, the public had grown too use to his demands and eventually readily accepted the far less efficient and less effective National Defense Act.

As a Social Darwinist, Wood believed struggle was the natural course of life. He felt "an infinite wisdom had established a great world struggle in which the fit survive -- not always the most moral."<sup>31</sup> Perhaps he cried "wolf" too often and called upon reason and unselfish service too infrequently.

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Men of affairs must expect public abuse. The most worthless man I know is the [one] who looks after my furnace. He is of no notice, but he has never been subjected to unfavorable comment in the public press.

Leonard Wood  
1910<sup>1</sup>

Strength of character does not consist solely in having powerful feelings, but in maintaining one's balance in spite of them. Strength of character can degenerate into obstinacy. Obstinacy is not an intellectual defect; it comes from reluctance to admit that one is wrong.

Clausewitz  
On War<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER VIII: THE FINAL LEADER CHALLENGE -- PERSHING

### Early Relationships

There was no other military officer of the period whose career more closely paralleled that of Leonard Wood than John J. Pershing. By 1920, there was no other military officer who hated and despised Leonard Wood more than John J. Pershing. The two had shared similar experiences and assignments, both were staunch Republicans, both had family and social connections in Washington power circles, yet they grew totally opposed in both outlook and conduct. Perhaps no other period in the drama of Leonard Wood's career more clearly relates the tragedy of his relationships with



his contemporaries and leadership style than the Pershing-Wood confrontation.

Pershing and Wood shared similar experiences. Both participated in the Indian wars, Wood with Lawton's campaign and Pershing with the 10th Cavalry, one of the Army's four regiments with black soldiers and white officers. Both Wood's and Pershing's operations in the American Southwest involved campaigns against Geronimo. Both served in the Spanish-American War and the Philippines. Both held civil government administration positions as the military governor of the Moro Province and both conducted combat operations against the Moros.

Each was elevated to brigadier general over many senior officers. Wood in 1901 had to rely on the full weight of his influential friends, foremost among them Theodore Roosevelt, to secure his promotion from the Medical Corps. That action forever earned Wood the disdain of senior line officers. Pershing's appointment from captain to brigadier general in 1906 required the full legislative skills of his father-in-law, Senator Francis Warren.

Each was afflicted with health problems. Wood's brain tumor seriously affected his health for over twenty years and eventually killed him. Pershing suffered heart problems that at one point forced his early removal from the Moro Province in 1903. He later took six months sick leave due to his heart condition in 1909, nearly costing him the position of governor of the Moro Province replacing Tasker Bliss.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, both would serve as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Each enjoyed a popular following in the public and the Republican oriented press. Both made a run for the presidency, ironically against each other. However, this marked the limits of their similarities. In the end, Pershing's extreme animosity towards Leonard Wood combined with Wilson's frustration with the ex-Chief of Staff effectively terminated Wood career.

Pershing's acquaintance with Wood began in the Spanish-American War. He saw Wood's energy in Tampa as they both worked to get their respective units to Cuba. Pershing took note that they had been in the Army approximately the same amount of time (nearly thirteen years) but he went into the battle as a lieutenant while Wood was a colonel and a brigade commander at Kettle and San Juan Hills. Each had different recollections of their service together. Pershing had ended up serving under Wood as the 10th Cavalry was part of Wood's cavalry brigade. Wood subsequently wrote a recommendation for the lieutenant:

I have the honor to invite your favorable attention to Lieutenant John J. Pershing...has performed his duties with marked gallantry and efficiency. Any consideration which you may be able to show him will be well deserved.<sup>4</sup>

Pershing, however, had far different memories of his brigade commander. After the brigade had succeeded in capturing the heights of San Juan Hill, the dismounted cavalry was consolidating its position, caring for wounded, and occupying the trenches. Seeing the officers of the Rough Riders and the 6th Cavalry gathered about Wood and his staff, Pershing joined the

discussion on what to do next. Wood and the other senior officers present were concerned that their position was too vulnerable. Pershing was shocked to hear Wood propose a withdrawal to safer ground. Though the withdrawal was never ordered, Pershing was "miffed and a bit suspicious of superiors who quailed amidst courage."<sup>5</sup>

For a short time Pershing and Wood again served together on the Philippines while Pershing was the commander of Fort McKinley and Wood was Philippine Division commander. Each watched the other warily. Pershing thought Wood "a great facade of a man, hollowed by conceit who warped friendship into serfdom that made him a pawn of ambition."<sup>6</sup> However, Pershing was dutifully subordinate and obediently conformed to Wood's wishes. On the other hand, Wood "saw threats in other quick careers. The patness of Pershing bothered him."<sup>7</sup>

Pershing worried about the affects on the public opinion of the Army of Wood's earlier handling of the Moro problem. Memories of the Bud Dejo massacre were still fresh when Pershing took command of the Moro Province himself. After Wood's campaign in the Moro Province, Tasker Bliss' tour was known as "an era of peace."<sup>8</sup> When Pershing replaced Bliss, the new military governor sought to continue the positive rebuilding programs. Pershing's efforts of 1911 proved fruitful and the Moros of the region were disarmed with comparatively minimum casualties. His success was touted as "masterly" in the press and comparisons were made to Wood's earlier bloody massacres.<sup>9</sup> Wood's suspicions increased.

## As Chief of Staff

When Wood was Chief of Staff, he and Stimson worked to streamline the General Staff and consolidate Army posts for training and fiscal efficiencies. In the Senate, Pershing's father-in-law, Senator Warren, was the primary supporter of the traditionalist General Ainsworth. Warren sought to keep the targeted posts open and countered staff reforms. Stung by the dismissal of Ainsworth, Senator Warren (along with Representative James Hay, Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee) attached a rider to the 1913 Appropriations Bill. It prohibited the President from taking action on the existing posts and stated that no officer could be chief of staff who had not served at least ten years as a line officer below the grade of brigadier general.<sup>10</sup> This was a direct attempt by Warren to legislate Wood out of the Chief of Staff job. President Taft was "already a little sick of Wood"<sup>11</sup> so it took extremely strong intercession by Stimson and Root to convince the President to veto the bill and save his Chief of Staff.

Though the veto was sustained, the confrontation between Congress and the Executive Branch over Wood aroused a suspicious Congress against the Chief of Staff and served to derail the reform movement.<sup>12</sup> Wood, always one to hold a grudge, never forgave Warren for his direct attack and angrily associated Pershing with the effort because he was a possible replacement for Wood.

## Commander of the A.E.F.

With the entrance of America into World War I, a decision had to be made on the Commander of the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.). Four generals were under consideration, Wood, Pershing, Thomas Berry, and J. Frank Bell, however the latter two were almost immediately rejected due to age and health.<sup>13</sup> Wood's problems with the administration cost him the A.E.F. job. He saw conspiracy and treachery all around but particularly in Senator Warren's lobbying for Pershing just prior to the command announcement.

But Wood was able to get to Europe in February 1918 as part of a group of thirty-two division commanders on a tour of the Western Front. Pershing sent back a letter to Secretary of War Baker asking that ten of the group not be sent back with their divisions for reasons of age, or lack of experience, or sickness (where he listed Wood's name because of his tumor).<sup>14</sup> Because most Europeans were unaware of the political intrigue Wood had generated back in the States, they had expected Wood to be the A.E.F. commander. Unfortunately, Wood again gave an ample demonstration of why he was not.

Across England and France as part of the division commander tour, Wood "launched into a freewheeling attack on Wilson and Pershing," lamenting the poor preparation and leadership of the U. S. Army, and criticizing the "broomstick" training the soldiers were receiving at home.<sup>15</sup> His efforts nearly overthrew

the efforts of Wilson and Pershing to keep the U. S. forces together instead of integrating them into European units as Marshall Foch wanted.

Convinced that Wood's tumor was affecting his judgement, exasperated by his actions during his visit to Europe, and believing that it would not be possible to ever work together, Pershing demanded Secretary Baker keep Wood in the States and not let him accompany his division to Europe. Perhaps no document so succinctly states the low esteem that Wood suffered in Pershing's eyes than the A.E.F. commander's cable to the Secretary of War on 10 June 1918. It summarizes the opinion of the vast majority of the Army's leadership, both military and civilian, on the leadership attributes of Wood:

10 June 1918, Pershing to Baker, "Personal and Confidential": Regardless of his physical unfitness, if sent to France or Italy it would introduce a disturbing factor in an already difficult situation as he would certainly endeavor to undermine the structure that only loyal cooperation could build or maintain. Having his own political ambition always in his mind, he would, without question, endeavor to lay the foundation for his own political future. No matter what he promised, he would never subordinate to discipline under his former junior. His entire army career has fully demonstrated that loyalty is not a trait in his character. Both his reputation and character only inspire mistrust, even among those who know him best. He is unscrupulous, and I should have no confidence in him in the conduct of operations nor under any other circumstances. He would carry out orders only if they suited his purpose. He is superficial in military knowledge and training, and inclined solely to the spectator.<sup>16</sup>

## Presidential Campaign

In the 1920 Presidential campaign, Wood and Pershing found themselves adversaries one last time. Surprisingly, Wood beat Pershing in his home state primary. By the time of the Republican convention, Pershing had less than one-twentieth of the delegates as Wood.<sup>17</sup> But the convention became deadlocked between Wood, Frank Lowden, and Hiram Johnson. To break the deadlocked, the convention eventually chose a darkhorse candidate, Warren G. Harding. On hearing of Wood's loss Pershing, a bitter fellow Republican felt disappointed that he was not tapped by the convention. Pershing heard the news with sadness and some relief that his archenemy Wood would not be President. "On reflecting on Wood's loss he said, 'Could anything be better? The victory is ours. I die content.'"<sup>18</sup>

For Wood, it was the last crushing defeat. On riding home, he said to a companion, "I have never before realized in all my life what a melancholy, helpless, ugly spectacle is the rugged figure of a man with tears rolling down his cheeks."<sup>19</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. Hermann Hagedorn, Leonard Wood, A Biography, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1931), 105.
2. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 107-108.
3. Wayne Wray Thompson, "Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss, and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903-1913 (PhD dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1975), 186.
4. Hagedorn, vol. 1, 195.
5. Frank E. Vandiver, Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing, vol. 1 (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1977), 206.
6. Ibid., 406.
7. Ibid., 423.
8. Russell Roth, Muddy Glory: America's Indian Wars in the Philippines, 1899-1935 (West Hannover, Massachusetts: The Christopher Publishing House, 1981), 31.
9. Ibid., 33.
10. Hagedorn, vol. 2, 123.
11. Jack C. Lane, Armed Progressive (San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1978), 173.
12. Jack C. Lane, "Leonard Wood and the Shaping of American Defense Policy, 1900-1920" (PhD History dissertation, University of Georgia, 1963), 90.
13. Vandiver, vol 2., 682.
14. Donald Smyth, Pershing: General of the Armies (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986), 83.
15. Ibid., 85.
16. Vandiver, vol. 2, 804.
17. Smythe, 272.
18. Vandiver, vol. 2, 1054.



19. Smythe, 123.

How much of this boldness remains by the time he [the commander] reaches senior rank, after training and experience have affected and codified it, is another question...This is the case because the higher the military rank, the greater the degree to which activity is governed by the mind, by the intellect, by insight. Consequently, boldness, which is a quality of temperament, will tend to be held in check. This explains why it is so rare in the higher ranks, and why it is so admirable when found there.

Clausewitz  
On War<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAPTER IX: FINAL THOUGHTS

If strategic leadership is vision, and surely Leonard Wood had a vision for America and the Army, the final question is whether Wood represents a model of strategic leadership worthy of emulation. A review such as this leads one to say certainly not.

His most critical biographer, Jack Lane, wondered "What assurance do we have that another Leonard Wood will not pose an even more serious threat to amicable civil-military relations?"<sup>2</sup> This is a particularly vexing question today as America downsizes its military forces. Cries of "No more Task Force Smiths!" again call attention to the preparedness alarm once sounded by General Leonard Wood. The political popularity of a MacArthur or a Schwarzkopf, forged by success in battle, in one case led to similar presidential confrontation and in the later may yet give rise to political ambition. With the right combination of

vision, popularity, and political strength the question becomes, could there be another Leonard Wood?

The answer lies not in the good intentions of the generals as Mr Lane proposes in his thesis. The answer lies in the core values of our senior military leadership. The core values of loyalty, courage, integrity, obedience, and unselfishness were compromised in Leonard Wood. A walk back through the vignettes of this study show a loyalty only to self, a moral courage unable to accept blame or adjust to change, an integrity lost in personal ambition and attacks on superiors and subordinates, obedience only in service to one's own agenda, and unselfishness only when it served personal gain. The tragedy of Leonard Wood's case is that others saw the absence of the core values and still accepted the man.

To some, Wood had become "too politically powerful to be disciplined and not insubordinate enough to be court martialed."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps a moral courage was needed in an administration that was indecisive and unable to define and enforce its standards of conduct. The core values were not seen as fundamental requirements for leaders.

Each leader must be held accountable and be judged by the cold, hard standards of the core values. There can be no compromise like that of the Wood era. A civilian leadership, if it is to preserve its predominance over the military, must define, practice, and enforce the core values. This will ensure there is no repeat of the divisive years such as those in the

earlier part of this century.

For Leonard Wood's part, the error is on the military. Wood truly had certain leader skills that inspired limited loyalty and a sometimes fanatic following. But he was not alone in possession of these skills. The Army's chore in the future is to hold rigidly to the core values in assessing its leaders.

As hard times and hard decisions approach on a national military strategy for the future, readiness will surely, and appropriately, be a rallying cry. Leonard Wood, a man of great accomplishments, can still be a mentor in our approach to the future readiness challenge. Perhaps not as an example for leadership emulation, but as an example for careful philosophical study of the rightful place of preparedness in our national priorities. But once core values become subverted, once the quest for personal "turf" or gain becomes confused with the argument of preparedness, then no matter how noble and pure, there will be a leader failure. This is the lesson from Leonard Wood. Today's officers need to understand that more than perpetuating one's singular vision of some "new" order, more than protecting or promoting personal agendas, adherence to our core values must remain paramount.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 192.
2. Jack C. Lane, "Woodrow Wilson and the Military: The Case of General Leonard Wood," Presentation to the American Military Institute, Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, September 1979, 15.
3. Ibid., 14.

**APPENDIXES**

## APPENDIX A

### THE CAREER OF LEONARD WOOD

9 October 1860	Born in Winchester, New Hampshire.
1884	Graduated, Harvard Medical School.
1885	Appointed contract surgeon for the U. S. Army.
1886	Appointed assistant surgeon, U. S. Army
1886	Participated in the campaign to capture Geronimo, later awarded the Medal of Honor.
1887-1889	Surgeon, Headquarters, Department of Arizona.
1891	Promoted to captain.
1895	Assigned to Army headquarters in Washington as assistant attending surgeon to senior government officials including the President.
May 1898	Appointed colonel of the 1st Volunteer Cavalry.
June-July 1898	Participated in Cuban operations at Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill.
July 1898	Promoted to Brigadier General, volunteers.
December 1898	Promoted to Major General, volunteers.
1898-1902	Military Governor in succession: City of Santiago, Santiago Province, and Cuba.
February 1901	Appointed Brigadier General regular service.
August 1903	Appointed Major General regular service.
1903-1906	Governor of the Moro Province, Philippines.
1906-1908	Commander of the Philippine Division.
1908-1910	Commander Department of the East.
1910	Special Ambassador to Argentina for its centennial.
1910-1914	Chief of Staff, Army.
1914-1917	Commander Department of the East.
1917	Organized the new Southern Department
1917	Commander, 89th Division.
1917-1918	Observed Allied operations in Europe.
1918	Commander, 10th Division.
1919-1921	Commander, Central Division.
1920	Unsuccessful candidate for President.
1921	Special mission to the Philippines.
October 1921	Retired from active service.
1921-1927	Governor General of the Philippines.
7 August 1921	Died in Boston, Massachusetts, of brain tumor.

APPENDIX B

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION

FOR

ASSISTANT SURGEON LEONARD WOOD, U. S. ARMY<sup>1</sup>

Rank and Organization: Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Army.

Place and Date: In Apache campaign, summer 1886.

Entered service at: Massachusetts.

Birth: Winchester, New Hampshire

Date of issue: 8 April 1898.

Citation: Voluntarily carried dispatches through a region infested with hostile Indians, making a journey of 70 miles in one night and walking 30 miles the next day. Also for several weeks, while in close pursuit of Geronimo's band and constantly expecting an encounter, commanded a detachment of Infantry, which was then without an officer, and to the command of which he was assigned upon his own request.

1. Extract from Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs, 96th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Committee Print Number 3, February 14, 1979, 324.



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